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THE  
PARISIAN;  
OR,  
GENUINE ANECDOTES  
OF  
DISTINGUISHED AND NOBLE  
CHARACTERS.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOL. I.

*Fictis meminerit nos non joculari fabulis.*

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

MINERVA PRESS,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

MDCXCIV.

DEDICATION.

TO MY READERS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I DO not introduce myself to you van-guarded by the illustrious name of a great man, or a great woman, furbelowed and decorated with a long train of the most dignified virtues. What amusement would this afford you? And where would be the satisfaction of reading the most animated panegyrick if you had not a share in it?

I dedicate then to you, and you only, the following pages: and I dare aver, that in imputing to you a few virtues, a few graces, and a few beauties, I shall not be accused of flattery.

Had I been impolitic enough to offer to an individual in the guise of a Dedication, that luscious food which, enigmatic quality, sickens all who do *not* swallow it, I might perhaps have begun thus:

*To Her Grace the Duchess of—.*

MADAM,

The eminent and conspicuous virtues which enrich your mind, and distinguish your Grace equally with the exquisite and acknowledged beauty of your lovely person,—  
—

Or thus:

*To his Royal Highness, or to My  
Lord, or to any body.*

How shall my feeble pen presume to trace those steady and heroic principles of rectitude and unalterable honor, which have ever marked your resplendent career of public life? Or how delineate those more private yet amiable virtues, for which you are so justly esteemed, so admired, so caressed, so adored, &c. &c.

Had I *fallen* into this strain, Lady Charlotte and her dear friend, unhappily reduced to the necessity of trying to fill an hour with looking over my petite piece, would have exclaimed—Oh heavens! pass over that nonsense and let us get at the story.

In the perusal of which think well of me, my dear readers, and believe me,

With the most profound respect,

Your obedient and ever

Devoted humble Servant,

The Author.

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THE  
PARISIAN.  
CHAP. I.

IN 179-, Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, entering her eighteenth year, was brought to England, where she had once before been in the course of her education, by Madame la Marquise de Germeil, to whose care she had been entrusted from her infancy, and who possessed over her pupil an uncontrolled power; the influence of a mother, and that authority and free agency which a father only could delegate.

Madame de Germeil had carefully improved the infantine fondness of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, whom she always distinguished by the appellation of her child, to an affection as ardent and firm as that which this self intitled mother avowed for her: She had indeed devoted fifteen years, without intermission, to the education of Adeline D'Ogimond; she had been the companion of her sports, the directress of her studies, had modelled her manners and understanding, nurtured with the utmost care every virtue, and checked every propensity to vice; while the most judicious attention, aided by experience, had formed a good constitution, on a frame naturally weak and sickly; and this appearance of confirmed health, with the most gentle and pleasing elegance of manners, had given her pretensions to personal beauty, which nature without high cultivation, would perhaps have denied her.

Mademoiselle D'Ogimond had not been brought up alone: In the company of Laure, who was six months younger than herself, she felt most happy. When Laure was first received into the family of the Count D'Ogimond, her origin and former residence were enveloped in a mystery no one could unravel, for the child herself was too young to satisfy the wonder her sudden appearance excited, and Madame de Germeil, who seemed alone able to gratify it, was the person in the world the best calculated to repress the impertinence of idle curiosity. —Laure was then generally supposed to be a poor orphan, procured by this lady to enliven the recreations and animate the studies of her pupil: She had brought the child home one morning, when she had been an unusual long walk; having ordered the carriage to meet her at Couci, a village three miles distant from the Chateau de Verni, the usual residence of Madame de Germeil and the Comte's children.

The surrounding dependants were taught by example, to behave to Laure with consideration; and they observed with astonishment that she was in most respects treated like their young lady; the principal difference consisted in not accompanying Madame de Germeil to Paris, when she carried Adeline to visit the Comtesse her mother, who had procured a separation from the Comte.

Monsieur D'Ogimond appeared much pleased, when he visited the Chateau, with the attention Madame de Germeil had evidently bestowed on the education of the little

stranger: Laure had indeed well repaid her trouble; her mind was quick and intelligent, her understanding solid, and her judgment well directed.

The sweetness of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's temper, when it was not obscured by too great a timidity, prevented any one from repining at the deference her rank demanded of them; but when Laure appeared, all consideration of rank, fortune, name and title were forgotten, and an involuntary homage, evidently due to a thousand amiable qualities that displayed themselves in her beautiful countenance, was paid without exaction. The elegance of her mind was visible in every look and every motion, the softest diffidence repressed the vivacity of her wit, and tempered that superior excellence, which would otherwise have been too visible to those whom pride or envy forbade to acknowledge it.

For Mademoiselle D'Ogimond Laure felt the sincerest affection, and would almost from infancy, have forborne any gratification to herself, to secure it for her little friend: She loved too Madame de Germeil, but she often reproached herself for not loving her still more. When this lady spoke of her impartiality to the two girls, which often happened, Laure wondered how she could suffer her fondness for Adeline, so much to warp her judgment; for of Madame de Germeil's sincerity she would then almost have thought it sacrilege to doubt; but while she made this observation, she did not repine at it, and indeed it was founded on such minute, though frequent occasions, that while her penetration discovered, and her sensibility made her feel them, had they been strictly related, the hearer would have thought the mind highly irascible, that could be offended at such trifles.

In general the behaviour of Madame de Germeil was in the highest degree guarded; she well knew, that very little attention will be paid to the instruction of those, whose conduct is a perpetual contradiction to their precepts. Madame de Germeil had however a very obvious failing; she was too desirous of being beloved; consequently those who were interested in appearing attached to her, soon learnt to sooth this foible by flattery, and no expressions of fondness and admiration, however unbounded, appeared exaggerated, when they were directed to herself. This was an unfortunate circumstance for Laure; she was capable of feeling all the ardour of gratitude, and her heart was formed for the noblest friendship; but her ingenuousness and delicacy equally prevented the frequent exclamations, and strong asseverations of fondness, which as Mademoiselle D'Ogimond had in childhood found capable of soothing displeasure, and almost atoning for trivial offences, she began to use perhaps from artifice; but in proportion as she grew sensible of the more than maternal attentions of Madame de Germeil, they became, though still habitual, quite sincere: and while the one continued to make demands of praise, the tenderness of the other disposed her amply to pay what the long and extraordinary attachment of Madame de Germeil seemed so well to merit. This circumstance combined with others, to make Mademoiselle D'Ogimond by far the greater favorite; and long before the journey to England, the modest opinion Laure entertained of her own merit, and the high sense she had of the attractions of her friend Adeline, induced her to think the partiality was merely justice.

## CHAP. II.

IMMEDIATELY on their arrival in London, they were fixed in a house prepared for them in Park-Lane, where in the beginning of April, the variety, life and beauty of the scene, soon dissipated the idea the young ladies had entertained from their first residence in London, which had been in a less frequented part of the Metropolis, that it partook of the gloom imputed to the inhabitants of this country.

The house was soon frequented by visitors of the first rank. Madame de Germeil was personally known to many, and curiosity led others to visit a lady, who was celebrated even in England as an authoress; but an object still more attractive was the beautiful Laure: In a country where almost every woman is pretty, and many are exquisitely handsome, the young *Françoise* was generally regarded with the highest admiration.

In the number of Madame de Germeil's friends, Mrs. Grenby was the most distinguished: This lady, now no longer in the bloom of that beauty for which she had once been courted and caressed, had still secured pre-eminence by a cultivated understanding, a refined and happy manner, and the reputation of lively wit. To be admitted to her circle, was considered at once as a criterion and proof of intellectual merit, and gave great pretensions to the title of *bel esprit*. She was infinitely pleased with the *élèves* of her friend, and reflected with satisfaction, how much they would ornament and enliven her select parties.

The Count D'Ogimond had resided much in England, and quitted it the first year of Lady Carbreon's *entrée* in the gay world, whose idol she soon became; no one could more admire her than the Comte, from whom she readily admitted a written request that she would some times permit Adeline and Laure to have the advantage as well as the pleasure of seeing her.

Lady Carbreon had now been three years the grand directress and controller of fashion, nor was it to be wondered that her reign had lasted thus long: — Her person was remarkably fine and well proportioned; and giving the reins to a vanity and caprice naturally unbounded, in displaying it to the best advantage, she was careless of violating not only decorum, but even decency; it is true that in her personal decoration she constantly kept nature in view; but she presented her rather too fully to the view of others.

To this lady, in compliance with the wishes of the Comte, Madame de Germeil, with some reluctance, introduced her pupils. She was flatteringly attentive to Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, but the charms of Laure gave her a sensation of envy, her excessive vanity had scarcely ever before permitted her to feel: she had hitherto triumphed in the imagination of unrivalled beauty, but now she evidently perceived that she would be compelled to yield the palm to this intrusive foreigner, a girl who knew not her parents, who had not the advantage of being owned even as the illegitimate child of a

man of fashion: a wretched foundling, who had been cast by the most vexatious of chances into the sphere in which she shone, on purpose surely to obscure the lustre of her brightness.

With these ideas it is not wonderful that the vain haughty woman of rank should not treat her with complacency. Fortunately Laure, who did not find any attraction in the general manners of Lady Carbreon, was therefore the less affected by her particular reserve to her, and was more than sufficiently consoled by the open partiality of Mrs. Grenby: Indeed, when an interested motive or general envy did not interfere, Laure was one of those beings who have the happy power of stealing on the affections, of disposing every heart to fondness and friendship, and exciting universal benevolence. How few has nature thus favored! and of the number some are again disqualified, by absurdly cherishing a ridiculous failing, or habituating themselves to some pernicious vice.

Madame de Germeil was careful to contract as much as possible her society; and though she could not from various motives render it as select as she wished, she found very little inconvenience from its extension, as she had peculiarly the art of being distantly polite, and by no means possessed that weak credulity, with which some people open their arms to all human kind, and make every one a sharer in their breast.

Lady Carbreon, the second Sunday of their residence in London, called in her vis-a-vis, for the purpose of taking Adeline to the gardens. Madame de Germeil, though piqued that Mademoiselle D'Ogimond had alone been invited, did not think proper to refuse the request; she had already seen enough of Lady Carbreon to dislike her as a chaperon for the timid Adeline; but acceding with a tolerable grace to the proposal, she added, that as she intended herself to be there, she would spare her Ladyship the trouble of conducting Mademoiselle D'Ogimond home. Lady Carbreon was not much delighted with the intimation, for by excluding Laure from the invitation, she meant to have prevented herself, that morning at least, the mortification of being a secondary object. Her arrangement unluckily occasioned the very circumstance she wished to avoid; for Madame de Germeil was ever unwilling that Adeline should be long from her sight, and concluded, Lady Carbreon could not forbear joining her when they met.

This was precisely the case; and, mortifying sight! as her Ladyship was chatting with the horsemen, from the ha-ha, she observed a wandering in their admiration, as new to her as it was provoking, and turning, beheld in Laure the unconscious author of her vexation: She had for some minutes been gladly discovered by Adeline, whose gay companion having been too much occupied to attend to her, had found herself rather solitary. Lady Carbreon had before seemed rooted to the spot, but now complained of the sun, and proposed turning to the shade.

They were followed by several gentlemen, who had dismounted to take a nearer survey of what had much charmed them at a distance; but by far the greater part, before they would venture to *commit themselves* by such a step, stayed to hear the opinion old General Williams entertained of the French girls.



The General was a man of low origin: In the East Indies he had amassed a splendid fortune, which had enabled him to procure admittance in the first gaming circles, and establish an intimacy with characters of the first rank. No one was more profuse in acts of extravagance, and, to do him justice, sometimes in acts of liberality; but his extraordinary vanity soon grew so luxuriant, as to be a perpetual fund of entertainment, and the General became a sort of privileged person. — Scarcely any one, on the first view of him, could be persuaded that he was not caricaturing the folly of self-created importance, and from being suffered to utter his unrestrained opinions without check or controul, because some were amused with him, and others were silenced by the recollection of a gaming debt, he was at length attended to from habit, and, at last, people accustomed themselves to think that he possessed judgment enough to decide on the appearance and conduct of others, notwithstanding the extravagant absurdity he exhibited in his own.

‘The Comte’s daughter,’ said he, with a contraction of the brows, and a dangle of the jaw, ‘is *very well*.’

This sentence past, his audience unanimously agreed that Mademoiselle D’Ogimond was ‘nothing,’ — ‘nothing’ — ‘quite’ — ‘nothing.’

They now awaited with some anxiety his decision upon Laure; they wished it to be according to their feelings, but if not, they were not at all disposed to throw the gauntlet for her.

‘That Laure, resumed the General, ‘that Laure, what is her name?’ — ‘They call her D’Aubigny.’ — ‘Ay, she will do!’

A confused murmur now arose of lovely! charming! eyes! teeth! dress and tournure! After which they all filed off, to follow the steps of the enchanting Laure D’Aubigny. And the little General reflecting with complacency on the singular good nature and mercy of his decree, stooping his nose almost to the saddle bow, took an immoderate pinch of snuff and rode away.

The gardens were crowded, and as it was soon understood that Lady Carberon’s party were French women of distinction, every body followed to gaze, and were not soon desirous of relinquishing a sight, that engaged their admiration equally with their curiosity. Lady Carberon could not but suspect, notwithstanding the excellent opinion she entertained of her own powers of fascination, that *above* half this homage was not paid to her, and began to feel a violent head-ach, which on observing Lord William Dalvening by the side of Laure, and recollecting he had not uttered a syllable to any one else in the last half hour, threatened to end in a fit of spasms.

These symptoms being communicated to Madame de Germeil, they attempted to quit the gardens, but the crowd without, wishing to get in, and the crowd within, endeavouring to get out, made it utterly impracticable. — They had advanced however so far that they could not recede, and found themselves very unpleasantly situated, from the

excessive thronging of those who joined the multitude, merely to see what was the matter.

Laure was accidentally nearer the door than her companions, and, notwithstanding the protection of Lord William, she was greatly incommoded by the pressure of the mob; ashamed of fears she could not entirely disguise, she observed, as an apology for them, that she had never before been in a crowd.

‘I hope you will not suffer much,’ returned Lord William, ‘and then you ought not to complain, since I believe you to be the principal cause of the evil, by exciting universal admiration, which these good people, in testifying, have not so much consulted politeness as they ought to have done; yet it is a very common, though an unpleasant mode of expressing approbation in this country, and an English lady is too much flattered by the cause to feel inconvenience from the effect.’

‘Your Lordship,’ said Laure, laughing, ‘has very adroitly endeavoured to make me insensible of heat and fatigue, by this extraordinary application to my vanity; but I confess I should be very well satisfied never to be the object of curiosity, were it always to be gratified at the same expence.’

‘Curiosity and consequent admiration,’ replied he, ‘are not the only emotions the charming Mademoiselle D’Aubigny excites, she must be equally accustomed to find herself the object of a more particular and interesting sensation.’

The turn of this speech induced Laure to look round for her party, and with some exertion she soon gained the same situation.

Lady Carbreon insisted that she was too ill to remain where she was, and with great difficulty and trouble was put into her carriage. Madame de Germeil very prudently chose to wait until she could retire in a quieter way, which was not effected before five o’clock.

Madame de Germeil dissatisfied with this début, and not inclined to hazard the repetition of such a scene, resisted for some time any solicitation to another appearance in public; and a fortnight was passed in the same tranquillity that marked their days at the Chateau de Verni. In this time Adeline and Laure applied with much assiduity to remove a slight french accent, which was almost the only thing that could distinguish them as foreigners when they conversed in this language.

But the calm was disturbed by news of the most alarming nature from Paris. The Comte wrote to them, that his situation was no longer a secure one; he had been, he said, maliciously misrepresented to the national assembly, and had been advised to fly; but as this measure would in all probability deprive him of his fortune, he could not think of pursuing it: He added that the young Marquis de Saint Ouïn was unhappily involved in his misfortune, and he greatly feared, the impetuosity of this gallant young man would betray him into some fatal mischance: He concluded with desiring Madame de Germeil

to remain in England, and repeated his *particular wishes* that she would cultivate an intimacy with those whom he had already pointed out to her.

She read the first part of the letter with a terror and astonishment she endeavoured in vain to suppress: Mademoiselle D'Ogimond wept, while Laure felt a pain too acute to allow of such relief. The long experienced kindness of the Comte impressed her mind with more than usual force, now that she believed him surrounded with danger, and the secret suspicion she sometimes experienced that he was her father, by increasing her affection, redoubled her anxiety: But this was not all her grief: The Marquis de Saint Ouin claimed a share in it. He had been the friend of Adeline and herself from early childhood: How benevolent how generous was de Saint Ouin! — With what sorrow did he quit the neighbourhood of Verni, when he was obliged to join his regiment; and how often had he relinquished the gaities of Paris for several days merely to pass a few hours with them: How amiable! how gentle! And was it possible to suspect or injure him?

Roused at length from this reverie by the distress of Adeline, she thought for some minutes only of soothing her grief. Madame de Germeil could not assist in this office; she was thoughtful and more dejected than they had ever seen her before: This, in a woman of her firm mind, argued a strong sense of danger, and added new force to their terrors.

After a week passed in the most torturing suspense, they received another letter from the Comte, who informed them he had thought of an expedient that insured his safety, and much extolled the generous friendship of de Saint Ouin, who was then, he said, executing an important commission for him in the département Du Nord.

This intelligence greatly quieted their alarms, and Mrs. Grenby calling in at that moment, endeavoured to dissipate the impression they had left by her enlivening conversation: She quitted them after receiving a glad acquiescence to an invitation to spend the following day with her.

Here they met with Lord William Dalvening, who was rather a favorite with Mrs. Grenby, and her brother Mr. Cosbyne, who arrived from Ireland but the day before—in person he much resembled his sister, in mind and manners still more; this was perhaps the result of the infinite pains she had taken to render him all her fond partiality wished him to be; and she had so far succeeded that few could converse with him and not be pleased.

He appeared much struck with Laure the moment she entered, a circumstance that did not escape Lord William, who redoubled his assiduities, and seemed to wish Mr. Cosbyne to believe that Laure understood the motive of them. Madame de Germeil had perceived this young nobleman's penchant, and tho' she did not appear to encourage, she was not solicitous to deprive him of any opportunity of expressing it. She acted thus, in conformity to a hint the Comte had given her, in a letter addressed singly to herself.

After dinner Mrs. Grenby observed, that her box happened to be wholly unoccupied that evening, and asked if they had any inclination to call in at the opera: Madame de Germeil readily assented, for she had deferred securing one for herself until she could be assured of remaining in England, and had not visited the Hay-Market since her former residence in London.

Lord William looked very serious whenever Mr. Cosbyne addressed Laure, and contrived to place himself in the box immediately behind her chair, a situation for which he was universally envied. Madame de Germeil was surprised to find the performance fall so infinitely below that she had so much admired a few years before; and the difference was striking enough to be observed by the young ladies, children as they were at that time: At present they found not either singers or dancers capable of exciting the admiration, Pachierotti, le Pique and Rossi had inspired; so far from it, the performance was more calculated to lull the audience to sleep than wake them to delight. Madame de Germeil cautiously expressed her sentiments on the subject.

‘Why yes,’ returned Mrs. Grenby, ‘I must confess I agree with you, for I can scarcely imagine a degree of dullness beyond what these people have arrived at: But I really ought to beg your pardon for not giving you this information before you came here: I heard that we should be presented with something new to night.’

‘I understood too,’ said Lord William, ‘that the new ballet was to come out this evening; I suppose as they are not very fond of trouble, they are trying to make the old one do a little longer.’

‘I cannot forbear admiring the excessive patience of the subscribers,’ observed Mr. Cosbyne, ‘who, charitable creatures, will allow a trumpery burletta to be hurried over, almost every night through the season, that Signora——after strutting her hour here, may run to the other theatre, and in the same shoes that have borne her through the kennels, scramble upon the stage, and perform her part in the farce.’

‘It is impossible,’ cried Madame de Germeil laughing, ‘not to praise the industry that prompts this violent exertion.’

‘Certainly,’ returned Mrs. Grenby, ‘had she any other motive than extreme avarice; but the woman who does this is very rich and has not any children.’

Adeline and Laure compared Signora —— with the Parisian Actresses, many of whom could have vied in magnificence with the eastern Princesses they sometimes personated, and while they readily acknowledged an ostentatious profusion of expence to be at best very ill judged, they thought it more justifiable in the one to appear on the stage adorned with jewels really suitable to an assumed character, than in the other to present herself before her audience in a careless and dirty dishabille.

Lord William zealously assented, and addressing himself to Laure. ‘Signora ——’ said he, ‘presumes too much upon the favor her merit as a singer and an actress gives her

with the public. She has yet to learn,' he added in a lower tone, 'the effect of superior excellence, joined to the inexpressible charm of unconscious modesty.'

So true was what his Lordship meant to infer, that without the least idea of the complimentary allusion contained in his speech, Laure answered gaily; 'It would be kind then in any one, to hint to this superior excellence, to "bear her faculties," as your Shakespear says, "a little more meekly."

'No, no,' replied Mrs. Grenby, 'it is all much better as it is now, you hear she would then be totally overcoming.'

When Lord William conducted Laure to the carriage, he eagerly profited by a momentary opportunity to assail her with a passionate profession of admiration: 'Do not,' added he, 'too lovely Laure, be offended at the apparent temerity of this precipitation, which I would not have hazarded had I not discovered a rival in every man who sees you.'

Laure was much rejoiced to find herself, at the conclusion of this speech, at the side of the carriage, into which she jumped with as little ceremony and as much pleasure as if she had escaped some terrible danger, leaving Lord William so much piqued and chagrined at her alacrity to quit him, that he hardly recollected himself sufficiently to assist Madame de Germeil in after her.

The next morning tickets of invitation were presented to them from Lady Carbreon, who meant to give a breakfast and fête champêtre at a villa, a few miles from town. Lady Carbreon would have much wished the absence of Laure on this occasion, but it could not be effected without displaying a motive her Ladyship's pride prevented her from acknowledging, though the same pride did not prevent her from feeling it. She sent to inform them, she wished the ladies of her party to adopt at the fête a uniform, which she thought would have a good effect, and if they were disengaged, she would the next morning shew them one she had contrived for the purpose. They went with great expectations of seeing something extraordinary, nor were they disappointed. Lady Carberon had resolved to brave the public eye in a cambrick petticoat under a loose floating drapery of sarsenet, which, with the addition of a chemise, was literally every garment that adorned the form they were not calculated or intended to conceal.

When Madame de Germeil and the young ladies were introduced into the dressing-room, Lady Carbreon, with all the conscious complacency of newly inflated vanity, awaited their expected approbation, which they innocently delayed to express, because they imagined the important toilette was not quite finished. The scene soon became rather embarrassing; Lady Carbreon looked, walked, and threw herself into a variety of attitudes; but still not a syllable was advanced in commendation of the dress.

Mademoiselle D'Ogimond had discovered some resemblance between the figure that paraded before her and a very fine statue belonging to her father; an idea to which the disposition of the drapery gave rise. A strict comparison would not perhaps have been

advantageous to the lady, as the statue was the unblemished production of a most capital artist, and few indeed were the women whose persons would have stood such a test.

Laure, to whom the same comparison had occurred, was insensibly carried by it to recollections of a far extended nature, and while her imagination wandered over every apartment of the chateau, and every well-known path of the wood of Verni, Madame de Germeil discovered that the momentous object they had all come expressly to see and admire, had been exposed to their view for ten minutes, without exciting a single comment; but in what manner to communicate this to Adeline and Laure, and repair the involuntary omission without giving further mortification, by acknowledging the cause, was rather perplexing; at length she exclaimed with quickness, and assuming a look of admiration, apropos of this charming dress, it is singularly elegant! and the stile of it explains that it is entirely your Ladyship's invention.'

'Oh quite,' returned Lady Carbreon, her features almost regaining the expression from which they had relaxed, 'but you see it merely pinned up, I will get it run together and send it you for a model.'

'We shall be very much indebted to you,' replied Madame de Germeil, 'but I hope you do not expect chaperons to wear it.'

'Oh je ne vous gênez, pas,' cried Lady Carbreon, 'you shall be at liberty to reject it if you please.'

'For myself then certainly, but these young ladies,' added she, not wishing to offend entirely, 'will be happy to profit by your Ladyship's taste.'

When they were seated in the carriage, 'Pray Madam,' cried Laure, laughing, 'are we really to undress to Lady Carberon's standard?'

Madame de Germeil gravely replied 'you must both certainly wear something like this apology for a covering; but I shall take the liberty of making your appearance more conformable to decency, by which I believe we shall equally ensure general approbation.'

### CHAP. III.

THE expected day was ushered in by a most beautiful morning, the sun shone with a genial warmth, and not a cloud appeared in the horizon, to disturb the great expectations every one cherished of the approaching entertainment. There was scarcely one in the number of the guests who was possessed of sufficient malignity to receive pleasure from the vexation Lady Carbreon would experience at a heavy shower, because they would themselves have been sufferers, either from catching cold, spoiling their cloaths, or being obliged to crowd into two or three rooms, and sit until their carriages could take them away, looking at each other in disappointed dulness; consoled only by reflecting that their neighbours were as miserable as themselves; and perhaps the certainty of the deprivation could be the only circumstance in the world to induce many of this assembly to regard the projected fête as an amusement, or regret that it was not to be.

Lady Carbreon having overcome her own sense of propriety without *much* difficulty, was irritated to find she could not conquer that of other people, for many absolutely refused to appear in the uniform; some indeed were absurd enough to exhibit their unweildiness in the attire their hostess had chosen for them, and others were not unaptly compared to those monumental figures where the sculptor has designed death and mortality by a half covered skeleton.

The plan certainly did honor to the refinement of Lady Carbreon's coquetry: She had, not unartfully, suited colours and textures to her own particular figure, and then imposed the same habiliments equally upon the tall, the short, the fat, the lean, the swarthy and the fair. But if, on this occasion, she generally excelled others in her appearance, she was, in return, as much surpassed by Adeline and Laure, who were habited with a *goût decent*. Adeline looked a pretty wood-nymph and was not an unpleasant contrast to the vivacious boldness of Lady Carbreon, who beheld Laure with half suppressed envy and vexation: — She had no ornament but a few flowers in her bosom, placed there by the hand of modesty: part of her hair, which hung in curls round her temples, was confined by a few tresses braided over it, and the rest fell in great profusion down her back; she was adorned with every grace the partial hand of nature could bestow, and all the innocent complacency of youth, not yet blighted by misfortune, and untainted with vice.

The tables and ornaments were disposed with much judgment, the music was heard but not seen, and rustic groups were observed here and there 'dancing in the chequered shade.' But the principal novelty of the day was a magnificent altar erected to St. Swithin, on which a sacrifice appeared to have been newly offered; in the front was placed an inscription, and it was whispered that Mr. Cosbyne had written it.

As Adeline and Laure were approaching to examine the writing, they were met by Madame de Germeil, who presented to them the Duke of Harmington, whose friendship, she observed, the Count D'Ogimond had the advantage of possessing, a benefit he highly prized. Laure would have been very much inclined to laugh at the figure that offered

itself to her eye, had it not been introduced with the support of the Comte's esteem; but now, while she received his compliment, she endeavoured to forget the absurd foppery of his appearance, and think of him with respect.

The Duke however soon contrived to render the task more difficult, by a ridiculous affectation of gallantry. While the politesse of this young old man induced him to address to Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, one of the many douceurs, his inclination had prompted him to offer to the beauty of Laure, the latter was discovered by Lord William Dalvening: She blushed, nor did he appear unembarrassed; his mien was less haughty than usual, his voice less elevated: He instantly asked Laure how long she had been arrived. 'About twenty minutes, my Lord.' 'I was accidentally detained,' continued he, 'at the moment I was setting out, for above half an hour, and I figured to myself the whole time, some happier fellow occupying the situation I was so anxious to possess: Have you seen Cosbyne this morning?' 'No my Lord.' 'You must have been among the first of those who are yet arrived, for I am told they began to drop in only a quarter of an hour since; but I shall bless the indolence of the multitude, if it occasions me to be the earliest candidate for the honor for your hand, should any of the party be inclined to follow the example of those rustics.'

As Laure was disengaged, she could not avoid acquiescing in the request; she recollected his peculiar behaviour the evening she was at the opera, and though she considered his speech as an impromptu sally of gallantry, yet she felt an invincible repugnance to the idea of his renewing it.

The Duke had been listening to Lord William with some impatience and now attacked Laure with such a profusion of looks, sighs, and notes of admiration, that Lord William bit his lips almost through, and began to be excessively out of humour.

They proceeded at the request of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, to examine the newly acquired honors of Saint Swithin: Lord William maliciously entreated the Duke to read the inscription, but the petition was abruptly refused; he then mounted the base of the altar himself, and read the following jeu d'esprit.

This day, oh damp and wat'ry saint! forbear  
To rattle in our ears a fearful show'r,  
Nor make our pensive, uncurl'd heads declare,  
With drooping unresisting locks thy pow'r:  
Prithee, dread Saint, hurl not thy vengeance down,  
Upon our hats and caps so very pretty,  
Nor on our déjeuné indignant frown,  
To give the absent sport, and make them witty:  
When of disaster we so little dream,  
Let them not say, as was their mock o' late,  
Thou turn'st to milk and water all our cream,  
And Cocoa mak'st of all our Chocolate.



As he finished the last line, Mrs. Grenby advanced, and after the usual compliments, 'Well ma bonne amie,' cried she to Madame de Germeil, 'what is your opinion of the fair lady of these bowers? I am quite charmed with the extraordinary effects of her genius: Your pretty nymphs wear her livery with a few improvements, I see; but I do not quite think it was intended they should be so lovely in it.'

Madame de Germeil smiled expressively, and made no reply.

'Is Cosbyne here?' asked Lord William. 'He is,' returned Mrs. Grenby, 'but as I have not seen him, I suppose he is seized and confined by Lord Carbreon, and is not to regain his liberty until he has produced some extatic lines on her Ladyship's beauty, and if this is really the case,' continued she, 'it is very fortunate that he was not allowed time enough to cast a pair of glances this way, or he might have been tempted to pop into the panegyrick, the names of Adeline and Laure, instead of the Divinity he was bound to celebrate.'

The Duke of Harmington asserted with some energy, that he would have then had a much happier subject for his muse.

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#### CHAP. IV.

AFTER breakfast the company broke into parties, and General Williams, who had not been there above ten minutes, seized the opportunity of being conspicuously placed; to stretch his hudibrastic figure, and exclaim, with a lengthened yawn, 'What devilish bores these breakfasts are!—I was obliged to rise at twelve o'clock,' continued he, addressing his next neighbour, who happened to be Lady Carbreon 'that I might get here in decent time.'

'I am sorry,' retorted, she with some anger, 'that you took so much trouble without accomplishing your purpose.'

The General, lifting up his eyes, pretended to discover the misapplication of his speech, when in reality, such was the absurdity of this strange being, he had uttered it merely to refresh his memory with a hint of his own importance.

'I thought, General,' said Mrs. Grenby carelessly, 'that you had been amongst the first who arrived.'

The General made no answer, and began grinding his teeth; for he had in his antipathies a wonderful dislike to being classed *amongst* any body.

The Duke of Harmington attached himself so assiduously to Laure, that Lord William, who would willingly have been the sole object of her attention, felt greatly relieved when a set of dancers was formed, to which he immediately led her. Mr. Cosbyne walked up to her, and glancing his eye on Lord William, said with a smile, 'I observe that I must not hope to dance the first set with you; but will you allow me to succeed your present partner when he is obliged to relinquish you?' Laure very readily assented and he went in search of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, whom he engaged, and conducted to the side of her friend.

The wonderful legereté and grace of the belles françoises, attracted general admiration; the Duke gazed until he was almost tempted to dance himself; but a little reflection soon convinced him of the danger of discomposing his crazy figure, by the shock of a rapid motion.

When Laure danced with Mr. Cosbyne, she was evidently more enlivened than with her former partner: She liked his manners and conversation; they indicated that he wished more to be approved than to be admired, and the good humoured politeness which always induced him to appear pleased with others, had the usual effect of making others pleased with him.

It now became Lord William's occupation to watch Laure; he did not dance, but placing himself near her, followed her with an anxious eye. He was teased by the Duke's professions of admiration, and the attention of Mr. Cosbyne seriously alarmed him; he

dreaded the impression his personal qualifications might make on the heart of Laure, and equally feared the influence of his sister with Madame de Germeil, yet he was re-assured, when he reflected, that Mr. Cosbyne's fortune was much inferior to his own, and that he was himself not without some prospect of a first title, and a splendid fortune, as his elder brother had very declining health; while Mr. Cosbyne, though of a more ancient family, was only the younger son of a younger brother. It had been given out, that Laure would not be portionless, and Lord William imagined the Comte would not permit her to ally herself imprudently.

When the Duke found that his tottering limbs would no longer support him, he seated himself by Madame de Germeil, to descant on the perfections of Laure, and then Mr. Cosbyne laughingly congratulated her on the acquisition of such an adorateur as the Duke. 'He seems to be now enamoured,' added he, 'of an object perfect enough to fix any heart, however inclined to rove, and we shall see whether his former wavering was occasioned by natural inconstancy of disposition, or delicacy of taste.' 'I should suppose,' returned Laure smiling, 'that as he has for so long a time sported with the arrows that wounded him, he can at present be affected only by that potent dart no human being can escape.'

'Oh, what an affront do you offer to his gallantry,' cried Mr. Cosbyne, 'such a sentence, were he to hear it from your lips, would prove to him the fatal dart you allude to.'

The sun piercing through the foilage that had hitherto sheltered the dancers from its rays, soon dispersed them. Mrs. Grenby took a place in Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's carriage, and in the ride to town told Madame de Germeil, that she intended to retire to a cottage she possessed near London, and only visit the metropolis occasionally, as she found the perpetual dissipation she was unavoidably engaged in, too much for her health and spirits.

'Retirement is in your power,' returned Madame de Germeil, 'but not solitude; for you will certainly attract to your dwelling, where ever it may be, all those you have once made happy in your society.'

'To prove what you flatter me with,' cried Mrs. Grenby, 'you must all promise me that I shall sometimes have yours.'

The proposal was made and accepted with equal readiness and good humour, and Mrs. Grenby did not leave them until late in the evening, when Madame de Germeil and the young ladies were engaged to Lady Lillingford's assembly, who having taken infinite pains to insure their presence, would never have forgiven them for neglecting her, and to incur her resentment was not a trifling event.

This Lady was a widow, with a jointure considerably smaller than her situation and mode of life would have allowed any one to suppose it: She would willingly have parted with virtue, nay *even* reputation, to procure the luxuries she had been accustomed

to, and knew not how to live without; but, alas! her youth was fled, and her beauty in its last stage: — A faro bank became her resource, and the plan succeeded: every fashionable wight resorted to her lure, swayed either by interest, intrigue, vanity, or folly; and this ruinous stream of complicated absurdity and villany bore down and overwhelmed many a mind, calculated for far better pursuits. Hither the cautious, the reserved Madame de Germeil was obliged to conduct her pupils.

As the room in which the bank was held, was much too crowded to admit them, they placed themselves in an adjoining one, and were much amused by the strictures they heard on Lady Carbreon and her fête, which were in general very severe; those who had found the most difficulty in procuring a ticket to get there, were the most positive in asserting the horrid fatigue it had been to them.

But the attention of every individual was soon called to a violent clamour which arose in the faro-room; it began with a loud murmur, which insensibly broke into scolding, shrieking, and the most terrible oaths, uttered with furious vociferation. The alarm easily spread, but the cause was not so soon discovered: At length the crowd near the door was forcibly broken through, and a very handsome young woman carried away in fits.

Madame de Germeil would have retreated, if she had had it in her power, for the heat became almost intolerable, and Mademoiselle D'Ogimond was much incommoded by it. Some ladies who stood near her imagined that the house was on fire, and communicating their fears without reserve or caution, the most horrible confusion ensued.

Laure observing a very old lady almost fainting, to whom no attention was paid, pushed towards her to offer her smelling bottle, but after effecting her intention, she found it impossible to return to Madame de Germeil and Adeline, and was driven the contrary way: To add to her terror, she perceived a violent scuffle very near her, from which she had not power to retire; she could just discern that a gentleman was grasping the collar of another, and kicking him through the room; several others interposed, but as she knew not their intention, it only made the affray appear more terrible. She stood motionless, pale and trembling, 'till Mr. Cosbyne, who had followed the combatants to assist in parting them, flew to her assistance. He begged her not to be alarmed, and assured her the affair would end very peaceably.

When she had a little recovered, he explained, in a low voice, the cause of the uproar. Lady Mary Valner, he said, who had been carried out, was playing at faro, and had received several hints from the marker that she was not so accurate as she ought to be, she had in return haughtily desired he would not be impertinent, and in three minutes he openly accused her of doubling down her card unfairly; her brother, who was present, resented the charge, and threatened to cut off the man's ears unless he retracted. The other replying that he would not retract, Lord Valner immediately knocked him down; and before he could be prevented struck him again several times.

The man irritated by this violent treatment, declared he would bring an action against his noble opponent, whose rage was then increased almost to madness; and Lady Mary shocked and terrified at the scene, had fainted. But the fracas is now nearly over, continued Mr. Cosbyne, 'and I hope to see you restored to your usual serenity.'

After acknowledging herself indebted to his politeness, Laure expressed a fear that Madame de Germeil and Adeline would be alarmed at missing her.

'When you no longer think yourself in danger, and I can procure you a seat,' returned he, 'I will find them out; at present there is no prospect of your being able to get near them, for many people are yet trying to crowd in, while few are endeavouring to get out. But I am sure,' added he, observing she changed colour, 'the heat is too much for you; we will try to reach the anti-room.'

Laure objected to it, as she would then have less chance of returning to the place where she had left Madame de Germeil. Mr. Cosbyne however earnestly insisted that she should try to get a little air, for she became every minute more pale and faint; he drew her through the crowd to a better situation, and then went to procure her some water: Before he returned Lord William Dalvening made his appearance; he had learnt from Laure where she was to be in the evening, and had broken from a dinner party to meet her. He was surprised to see her alone and evidently indisposed; she would have explained the reason, but agitated as she had been, and expressing herself in a language not her own, she could not immediately find words: Before she had uttered many Mr. Cosbyne returned, and offered to seek out Madame de Germeil. 'No,' cried Lord William, 'you are attending Mademoiselle D'Aubigny, and you had better continue in an office that seems to afford you so much happiness; I suppose I can perform the commission almost as well.'

Without waiting for an answer he left them; but the jealous pique that dictated this speech, could not enable him to suffer Mr. Cosbyne to remain long in quiet possession of his post, and before he had advanced a dozen steps he turned back, and said he had found it impossible to proceed.

Laure waited with as much composure as she could assume, 'till a number of people finding that nothing farther was to happen, retired to report in other circles, as much of the event as they could contrive, with the help of a little conjecture, to make out.

An antiquated Dowager, with a chin like the point of a chinese slipper, observed that she was not at all surprised at the indignation of Lord Valner, at a discovery so disgraceful to his sister.

'Neither am I,' replied another, whose little grey eyes shot a gleam of triumphant malice as she uttered the remark, 'for I believe it is pretty certain that he went snacking with her.'

Madame de Germeil was rejoiced to discover Laure, as it enabled her to return immediately home. 'I am sorry,' said Mr. Cosbyne, as he attended them to their carriage, 'that you should have witnessed this scene; I can assure you, that to me it has been a very singular one: Do not let it impress your minds much to our discredit.' 'O ciel' cried the innocent Adeline, with an involuntary emotion, 'quelles mœurs!' Laure thought of them as they merited, in silence.

Madame de Germeil found herself the next day much indisposed with a nervous head-ach, a disorder to which she was some times subjected. Since the Count's last letter, she had cultivated the society of many she had before avoided; to Laure her manner was more affectionate, and she advised Mademoiselle D'Ogimond to endeavour to conquer that extreme timidity, which sometimes giving an appearance of reserve, would often be mistaken for pride.

Madame de Germeil's indisposition increasing, she was for several days confined to her chamber, where Mrs. Grenby still sought her society. She had awaited the recovery of her friend, to quit London as she had proposed, and when Madame de Germeil was convalescent, she urged her to bring the nymphs, as she usually called them, and stay two or three weeks, at her cottage. Madame de Germeil's inclination led her to accept the proposal; but the intelligence she daily expected from the Comte was of such importance, that she did not chuse to delay the receipt of it even for an hour; and another reason, though of less consideration, yet not trivial, was that the Physician who attended her could not follow her out of town, though the distance was only six or seven miles.

Making the last reason the ostensible one for refusing the friendly proposition, Mrs. Grenby was obliged to submit; but it was at last settled that Laure should accompany her to Wincale, the name of her place, and Mrs. Grenby appeared satisfied with her friend for departing from a plan she had hitherto adhered to, never to suffer her pupils to quit her for more than a day; 'Well then,' cried Mrs. Grenby, rising to go, 'I shall rusticate on Thursday, so I give Laure two days to prepare for this terrible separation.'

When Laure bade adieu to her friends, she endeavoured in consideration to Mrs. Grenby, to suppress the regret she felt at her first absence from Adeline: She was uneasy too at leaving Madame de Germeil in the state of weakness and languor to which she was reduced. The affection this lady had lately shewn her, had strongly revived in her heart the fond gratitude her former coldness had rather chilled.

Mrs. Grenby looked on these naïve sensations of an unhacknied and uncorrupted mind, with complacency and approbation: She had formerly felt them herself; but such sentiments had been checked, in proportion as experience had taught her, not to expect to find them in those, with whom her situation in life led her to mingle. Her motives for wishing the company of Laure were not entirely derived from the partiality she felt for her: Mrs. Grenby in her retirement was not desirous of leaving the world behind her; she was delighted with the conversation of intelligent people, and was not insensible to the pleasure of knowing, that it was repeated in the circles she left with such seeming

indifference, how many distinguished characters the charms of Mrs. Grenby's wit had attracted to Wincale: She had however too much policy to trust entirely to her own power of pleasing, and was careful to add as many agrémens as she could assemble, for the gratification of her guests, in the number, neither the attractions of good wines or good dinners were omitted. The admired beauty of Laure she made use of to assist her purpose; yet she would not have thwarted her own inclination to accomplish it; and had not Laure possessed qualifications to create friendship and esteem equally with admiration, she had never been sought by Mrs. Grenby as an intimate.

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## CHAP. V.

LAURE met at Wincale Mr. Cosbyne and the sister of Mrs. Grenby's husband; this party was strongly reinforced every day at dinner by visitors from London, who had been either selected for some happy talent, or shone by the collateral aid of distinguished birth or fashion. Miss Grenby had formerly felt a strong prepossession in favor of Mr. Cosbyne; but as the penchant had not been perceived, or returned with too moderate a portion of gratitude, she had wisely endeavoured to conquer it, and had happily succeeded.

Laure, accustomed to a life of the greatest activity, spent several hours every morning in the grounds, and Mr. Cosbyne very often hastened or deferred his ride to accompany her.

Pleased with his conversation, which was always cheerful, Laure sometimes pointed out to him with enthusiastic delight, every spot that had the least resemblance to the woods of Verni. 'Tell me,' said Mr. Cosbyne, fixing his eyes with attention on her countenance, 'whom you have left at Verni to lament your absence?'

'Only old Madame Delverue,' returned Laure with much simplicity, 'who has the Comte's permission to reside there.'

'Are there any seats in the neighbourhood?' demanded he with unusual curiosity.

'Oh yes, that of Monsieur de Saint Ouin's father.'

'Has the father then no other appellation?' said Mr. Cosbyne, with a smile.

'No,' replied she, 'he is likewise called the Marquis de St. Ouin.'

'Are you much acquainted with the son?'

'He was Adeline's companion and mine from infancy,' returned she with a sigh, 'until he left us to join his regiment.'

Mr. Cosbyne inquired no further, and Laure became pensive, from recollecting the danger of the situation into which the young Marquis had been precipitated, by his attachment to the Comte D'Ogimond.

Among the guests of that day was Lord William Dalvening, who soon observed the unusual coldness with which Mr. Cosbyne addressed the unconscious Laure, and evidently received pleasure from the remark: She had regained her vivacity, and made a few efforts to remove Mr. Cosbyne's accidental gravity, and they would probably have succeeded, had not Lord William's attentions which were very pointed, contributed to settle the gloom.



The next morning as Laure was preparing for her walk, Mr. Cosbyne in opposition to his general custom, ordered his horses and rode out. She had not been walking long before she met Lord William Dalvening, who was galloping towards the house: He perceived her at some distance, and flew to meet her. 'It was a presentiment of this fortunate rencontre,' cried he, 'that made me leave town so early this morning; to what exquisite chance am I indebted,' he added, 'for seeing you thus alone?'

'Mrs. Grenby is writing,' said Laure, gravely, 'and her sister is indisposed, and does not quit her chamber.'

'This is happy indeed,' exclaimed Lord William in high spirits.

'For Miss Grenby do you mean?' asked Laure.

'Heaven reward her,' returned he rapturously, 'for being so obliging.' — Perceiving that she looked at him with surprise, he added in a more sedate manner, 'you have apparently forgotten what I ventured to say to you some time since.' She blushed. 'And yet let me hope,' resumed he, 'that you have not—' Laure's colour heightened still more. He took her hand which she immediately withdrew. 'I had forgotten it, my Lord,' she replied with an air of reserve, 'and I do not wish to be reminded of it.' Her pride was involuntarily roused by the air of triumph his countenance assumed, and her timidity alarmed at an attack so precipitate and unceremonious, and she immediately turned into a path that led directly to the house.

The general complacency of Laure's manner had misled Lord William into an opinion that highly flattered his vanity; but he now perceived his error, and rather mortified to find that her heart had not so easily yielded to his attractions, he dismissed his gaiety, and adopted a look of more humility, while he expressed his hopes that she would not forbid his efforts to obtain the honor of her esteem and regard. 'The title of Mrs. Grenby's friend,' said Laure, with increasing gravity, 'insures your Lordship as much of either as I feel disposed to allow you.'

Unprepared for a reply so discouraging, Lord William was for a minute silent; at length, 'Will the lovely Mademoiselle D'Aubigny permit me,' asked he, 'to wait her decision, and receive it when she returns to town from Madame de Germeil?'

Though Laure almost penetrated the motives of this artful proposal, she felt such a repugnance to hear Lord William on this topic, and so averse to his renewing it, that while she gladly acquiesced in referring him to another, she told him she would write immediately to Madame de Germeil, and engage her to give him the proposed answer the next morning.

This was not what he wished, and as he now discovered what her sentiments were, he affected to decline receiving her determination until she had first seen Madame de Germeil. Lord William imagined not unreasonably, that his present fortune and future

expectations would much promote his interest with that lady, and presumed not a little on her influence with Laure.

His purpose was too obvious to escape her, yet she felt no apprehension from it; for she was persuaded Madame de Germeil had too much principle to exert authority on such a point as this. Lord William had no longer any inclination to discuss the subject farther, and too much out of humour to talk on any other, he suddenly left her.

She entered the house, and going immediately to Mrs. Grenby's dressing-room, found Mr. Cosbyne there alone.

'I should imagine from your appearance,' observed he, 'that you must have walked quick; have you been far Mademoiselle D'Aubigny?' 'Only to the north grove,' replied Laure. 'And have you been meditating there alone?' 'No, I met Lord William Dalvening.' 'And why do you blush?' said Mr. Cosbyne, in a manner unlike his own: 'Were you reminded,' he added with a forced smile, 'of your favourite wood, and the Marquis de Saint Ouïñ?' 'No, indeed, Sir,' cried Laure with great quickness, 'nothing displeasing can ever remind me of either.' She was quitting the room after a few minutes silence, when Mr. Cosbyne waking from a reverie, suddenly asked her, if she had not said that Lord William had offended her. 'I believe not, I did not mean it,' replied Laure, in great confusion. Mrs. Grenby at that moment entered the dressing-room, Lord William was announced, and Laure hastily retired.

She instantly wrote to Madame de Germeil the conversation between Lord William and herself, and expressing a strong dislike to him, earnestly entreated that she would have the goodness to prevent him from talking to her again on the same subject.

In the evening Laure received a letter from Mademoiselle D'Ogimond: The first lines gave her a confused sensation of astonishment and pain. The Marquis de Saint Ouïñ, she said, had fled from France with the utmost precipitation, and had sought a refuge, to use his own expression, from the resentment and fury of his countrymen, in England. Mademoiselle D'Ogimond added, that he appeared very absent and uneasy; he had scarcely answered her inquiries concerning her father, had not brought any letters, nor would he give her any account of the events that obliged him to retreat so suddenly from his country. He had had a long conference with Madame de Germeil, whose indisposition had since returned with redoubled violence. 'Our friend, de Saint Ouïñ,' continued Adeline, 'was much disappointed at not finding you with us; I would to heaven you were here, without my sweet friend at any time I could not be entirely happy, but now I am miserable.'

The tears of Laure betrayed that she had received unpleasant news, long before she had finished reading the letter. She felt a dread though she knew not of what, and perplexed herself in vain in trying to assign a motive for the sullen reserve of de Saint Ouïñ, who used ever to be so delighted to diffuse comfort and happiness, when he possessed that power in any degree; his silence respecting the Comte, the relapse of Madame de Germeil in consequence of their conversation, every thing the letter

contained, contributed to her uneasiness, which was too obvious to escape notice, and too serious not to excite curiosity.

Fortunately Mrs. Grenby's family only were present, and as they had each received letters at the same time, the violence of Laure's first emotion had been unobserved. Mrs. Grenby with the kindest delicacy soothed her without inquiry, and Laure apologizing for the concern she had given way to, mentioned the increasing illness of Madame de Germeil. Mrs. Grenby immediately offered to take her to town the next morning if she wished it; but observed that she should hope to find their friend recovered sufficiently to allow of her return to Wincale. Laure was pleased with the proposal; but would not venture to accept it, until she had first written to Madame de Germeil.

Mr. Cosbyne, who with the good-humoured Miss Grenby, had partaken of the distress of Laure, appeared much disturbed at the prospect of her sudden departure, which the small delay occasioned by the letter very little alleviated.

Unable to rest, Laure rose the next morning at day-break, and wrote to Madame de Germeil her request to be permitted to return to town. 'I am too anxious,' she added, 'to give or receive pleasure in any society, while I am absent from you, and know you to be ill.' She was entirely silent on the intelligence of Adeline, for she knew not of what extent her fears were, and how far they were justified.

When she had dispatched the letter, she sat for some time ruminating on every particular she had heard, relating to de Saint Ouin; but her ideas were confused and her mind much disturbed: His own words expressed in Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's letter, had given her a shock she could not surmount: What he had done, what he was capable of doing, that should excite 'fury and resentment,' and why he was so unwilling to speak of the Comte, she was utterly at a loss to divine.

After spending two hours in the most tormenting reflections, she attempted in vain to calm her mind by air and exercise; in returning to her chamber she was met by her maid, who scarcely breathing from the agitation her intelligence communicated in a superior degree to Laure, told her that the Marquis de Saint Ouin was in the breakfast room, waiting to see her. She heard no more, but flew to him. He started at her entrance, joy animated every feature, and sparkled in his eyes, while he kissed her hand in a transport that seemed for a moment to overpower him; but at length his features relaxed, his countenance fell, and his colour vanished.

Shocked at such a change, Laure anxiously inquired if he was ill. When he could find utterance 'The Comte,' cried he, 'the treacherous Comte has made me suffer what this moment can scarcely compensate.'

The pang these words conveyed to the heart of Laure could only be equalled by her astonishment, and her countenance plainly indicated her consternation.

‘Forgive me,’ he exclaimed, ‘forgive me, for thus making you participate my misery. I wish to justify myself to you. O, Laure! if you knew—but he is your friend—perhaps even—yet, no, it cannot be, he is not allied to *you*.’

‘Tell me,’ said Laure, in a tremulous voice, ‘what has happened, what misunderstanding——’

‘No, no,’ interrupted the Marquis, ‘I could not misunderstand, I know too well—but why do I make you miserable? I came, I believe, only for the consolation of seeing you, I needed it much, to sooth my anguish, and prevent me from publishing to the world a black transaction, that were it known, would be fatal to—your friend.’

‘What can you mean,’ cried Laure with horror, ‘tell me what you have suffered, of what do you accuse the Comte.’

‘He offered me,’ said de Saint Ouïn, grasping her hand, ‘a reward that might have tempted —— but I could not do an action vile, cowardly, dishonorable.’

‘What are you talking of,’ said Laure vehemently, ‘tell me, I beseech you.’

‘I have said too much,’ returned he in a languid voice, ‘I have not slept for many nights, and my mind is much disturbed. You will be told,’ continued he with more quickness, ‘that I am an abandoned villain; you will hear—but I will not render you unhappy.’

‘And do you suppose,’ said Laure, ‘that such intelligence will not make me so?’

‘You interest then yourself in my welfare,’ cried he earnestly, ‘and you would be grieved to think me guilty of the base and deliberate murder of a human being?’

‘It would make me miserable,’ replied Laure, bursting into an agony of tears.

‘Then you shall not think it,’ said the Marquis with vehemence, ‘the Comte, Laure, is a base, a treacherous wretch.’ She started. ‘If I had not proofs of his infamy I could not myself believe it. You should not hear it, from me at least; but that if I am silent, I must be to you an object of horror and detestation, and that I could not endure. Look at these papers,’ continued he, ‘they were preserved by the most fortunate chance; but I will not make use of them to overwhelm him in the ruin he meant for me: I have yet shewn them only to Madame de Germeil.’

‘It is the Count’s hand,’ said Laure, trembling from head to foot, ‘what do they contain?’

‘You must not read them now,’ cried he with precipitation, ‘you are already too much agitated; keep them together with this paper, and when you hear me reviled as an

assassin, you will there find my justification. And now,' added he, 'I must leave you, for I am unfit for conversation. When do you return to London, when shall I see you again?'

Laure told him the purport of the letter she had that morning written to Madame de Germeil. The Marquis was then leaving her, but Laure reflecting on the incoherency of his manner, and that he had said he had not slept for some time, asked him who had accompanied him to Wincale, and was pleased to hear that it was Valain, a servant much attached to him. De Saint Ouin's perturbation of mind was so visible, that she would have doubted his safety had he been alone; she entreated him to take some repose the moment he got home, and he departed highly gratified by her solicitude.

Miss Grenby was the first who entered the breakfast room, after he had quitted it, and was much alarmed at the inanimate and pale countenance Laure exhibited; who half recovering her recollection at the exclamation she uttered, complained of illness, and was conducted to her chamber, where she was left to her own reflections, after having unwillingly endured a repetition of inquiries and offers of assistance. She instantly prepared to examine the letters, intrusted to her by de Saint Ouin; the first she opened was from the Comte D'Ogimond, and her soul was chilled with horror on reading the following lines.

"I have full confidence in the sacred promise my friend de Saint Ouin made before we parted, to destroy immediately all written requests or communications I sent him: His own safety would be endangered equally with mine without this precaution.—I believe you were surprised at the urgency with which I entreated you to hasten your journey, apparently to execute a commission of small importance; but I foresaw at that moment the momentous event, that would necessarily require the personal assistance of one of the most zealous of my friends. Tell me, de Saint Ouin, did I think justly when I placed you in the number?—You have always considered Lamalaige as my inveterate enemy; and others have until lately, been equally deceived. The delusion is over and he is now suspected to have been my agent, and I confess to you that this is in some measure the case. Judge then of my danger when I tell you, he will be brought to the bar very shortly, which I was obliged myself to propose, to dissipate the jealous doubts some of these Catos entertain of the sincerity and disinterestedness of my patriotism. Lamalaige thinks himself sure of my secret protection, and refuses to fly; but by heaven! if he is ever brought before them I am undone: it must not be, I have friends who will free me from an evil so pressing. Briefly then, this man must not be suffered to destroy me by affecting to stand his ground; he must be put out of the way, and that in a sure manner, it must be done quickly so, or there is no time to deliberate. De Saint Ouin, my friend, you must be my preserver; you must entitle yourself to the eternal gratitude of my daughter and Laure, and which ever your heart has chosen, you shall immediately go to England and carry with you your brevet of happiness, in my consent to an union with the object of your wishes."

"Mean time Lamalaige must not live to utter my condemnation, for such the confession that will be extorted from him, must necessarily prove to me. You may if you chuse direct another hand to strike the blow; but it will be better, far better to do it

yourself. Remember that his perdition will be the salvation of many, and thus it will be an act of mercy. I can then safely affirm that the story of his being connected with me, was a calumny raised by—and the deed done to prevent a disquisition.”

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## CHAP. VI.

TREMBLING and aghast, Laure had read thus far, when the paper dropped from her hand, and she remained some minutes insensible.

When she recovered she looked round her with eagerness, and hoped to find that what had passed was only a terrible dream; but the open letter caught her eye, she examined the characters, they were still the same, and she shrunk from it as from the hand of a murderer. So strong was her horror that she could not overcome it sufficiently to look at the other papers, though she was greatly interested to know in what manner the Comte had injured the character of de Saint Ouin. At length reflecting that these testimonials of villany ought to be secured from every eye, she hastily deposited them in a place of safety.

A crowd of painful images occupied her imagination, when suddenly recollecting the sentence beginning, "which ever your heart has chosen," she felt indignant at being offered as the reward of infamy, and for the first time in her life fervently wished that there might not exist any natural tie between the Comte and herself. The amiable softness of Adeline heightened the pity she felt for her, at the certainty of her being his daughter, while her own situation of dubious rank, unavowed, and without a natural protector, appeared happy from the comparison.

A painful thought darted across the mind of Laure, when she recalled the perpetual and secret correspondence between Madame de Germeil and the Comte; but she instantly rejected with abhorrence, the idea that she was apprised of his culpable designs. She sympathized in the sufferings of de Saint Ouin, and wished to be near him to offer consolation: his wrongs, though she knew not of what cast they were, softened her to tears, which greatly relieved the agitation of her spirits.

To quiet the alarm the family had expressed at her indisposition, Laure forced herself to appear at dinner, where she made such efforts to obtain composure, and so far succeeded, that at the return of the messenger with a permission for her to leave Wincale, Mrs. Grenby consented to conduct her to town the next morning.

Mr. Cosbyne's manner the whole day was even beyond its usual complacency and attention; but he was not lively, and the cheerful sallies that used to escape him were no more: Laure would have been too absent to remark the change, had not his sister rallied him upon it, and imputed it *en badinant*, to the approaching departure of her little friend. He admitted the charge with great gallantry; but the sudden alteration of his countenance at the observation, was to the penetrating Mrs. Grenby a more unequivocal proof of the truth of it.

Miss Grenby expressed much regret for the loss of Laure's society; Mr. Cosbyne was silent on the subject, nor did he much expatiate on any other, but in the morning when she quitted him he bade her adieu with tolerable composure.

She found Madame de Germeil seriously ill, though she seemed to exert herself to receive Laure kindly; and Adeline felt her perplexity and distress much alleviated while she embraced her beloved companion: While Mrs. Grenby staid, she contrived to draw Laure aside, and in a low voice informed her, that de Saint Ouin refused to explain the mystery of his conduct; and expressed the most earnest wish to be made acquainted with it. 'Madame de Germeil,' she said, 'avoided her inquiries with such a studied evasion, that it increased her uneasiness and apprehension.'

Laure's hesitation and confusion would have betrayed more than she intended to discover, had not Madame de Germeil, who appeared jealous of the conference, interrupted it while she was framing a reply.

When Mrs. Grenby was gone, she called Laure to her, and welcomed her return with the most affectionate and flattering expressions of delight: She was either unable or unwilling to speak of the unexpected appearance of de Saint Ouin, and Laure was little inclined to begin the subject. Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, who felt no such restraint, eagerly sought to know her sentiments upon his sudden voyage to England; but Madame de Germeil checked her importunity, which she called childish, and rather peevishly begged that she might not hear any more of it. She detained them both in her chamber until the dinner was announced, examined the countenance of Laure with the most scrupulous attention, nor did she utter a word that escaped Madame de Germeil's ear.

The young ladies dined tête-à-tête, and the servants were hardly withdrawn when de Saint Ouin was introduced. He appeared more composed, though not less melancholy than he had been the preceding day. When he had sat five minutes, Madame de Germeil sent for Adeline, and he then entreated Laure to forgive the frantic visit she had had the compassion to tolerate at Wincale. 'I was so much disturbed,' he added, 'that I scarcely know what I may have said to you.'

She assured him, she was too sincerely grieved for his distress, to be offended with any thing that was the effect of it.

'You are, you ever were an angel,' he exclaimed. After a pause, 'have you,' said he, 'looked at those papers?'

'I read part of a letter from the Comte,' returned Laure with hesitation.

'Part of the first letter? Did you then read nothing further?'

'No, I had not courage to proceed.'

They were now summoned to Madame de Germeil's apartment: She was unusually assiduous in paying her court to the Marquis, who received her attentions with reserve, and acknowledged them with remarkable coldness; yet he staid late and departed unwillingly, after having accepted an invitation for the next day.



In the morning Madame de Germeil reminded Adeline to call on Mrs. Grenby, and some other ladies to whom she owed the same attention; and Laure then remaining with her tête-à-tête, she desired her with much kindness, to confide to her as a friend, the opinion she had formed of Lord William Dalvening, and her motive for a rejection so prompt and peremptory.

Laure, who had not very accurately examined the cause of her dislike to this young nobleman, was surprised to find herself at a loss for a reply: at length she said in some confusion, that she had not met with many opportunities of judging of the character of Lord William; but the few observations she had made had been to his disadvantage.

‘What are his errors?’ asked Madame de Germeil.

‘I think they are faults,’ replied Laure modestly, ‘I believe him to be vain and haughty, and has often so little the command of himself, as to be ill-bred.’

‘You acknowledge, my dear Laure, that your judgment is not formed from very deep observation; suppose then you give yourself a little time either to alter or confirm it, and I will in the interim,’ she added, fixing her penetrating eyes on the face of Laure, ‘write to the Comte for his advice, and instruction, upon this, as upon every other important occasion.’

‘His advice, Madam,’ replied she with firmness and composure, ‘I cannot claim, for I reject his interference.’

Madame de Germeil regarded her with amazement;—it was indeed Laure who had spoken. Her eyes were bent to the ground, and her countenance was serene; but it had lost the smile that usually adorned it.

‘De Saint Ouïn,’ said Madame de Germeil, after a long pause, ‘saw you I know at Wincale; he is himself deceived, and has I find misled you.’

‘Ah, madam,’ returned she, ‘can you then restore to the Marquis the good opinion he so well merited of the world, can you restore him his happiness, his fame, and his country?’

‘What has he mentioned to you?’ demanded Madame de Germeil hastily.

‘He has told me nothing; but those letters too well inform me.’

‘Imprudent!’ exclaimed she, then checking herself, ‘Laure, I cannot yet,—I am not authorized—I have already written to the Comte, and you shall be convinced that de Saint Ouïn has misapprehended every thing. He will himself, I am sure, retract his error, and until that time restrain your reflections, which are rash, and incompatible with the respect and obedience you owe the Comte.’

‘Tell me, madam,’ cried Laure eagerly, ‘has he a natural right to those sentiments from me, or does he claim them in return for the benefits he has bestowed on me? Tell me, in short, I intreat you, if you can, tell me who are the authors of my being, and why I was brought into the Comte’s family?’

Finding that Madame de Germeil hesitated, ‘Do not,’ resumed she, ‘be afraid of shocking my vanity by divulging the truth; was I born in a cottage, was I destined for the lowest station in life, and have I been raised from it by the too liberal and mistaken bounty of the Comte?’

‘You ask me,’ said Madame de Germeil, ‘what I cannot answer; but why is all this vehemence, and to what purpose your last question?’

‘I should be happy to learn that it was so,’ resumed Laure, ‘for then perhaps I might think of my father without a blush.’

‘When did you read those letters?’

‘I began them at Wincale; but I finished them only last night.’

‘You have not returned them then,’ said Madame de Germeil impatiently, ‘let me see them.’

Laure hesitated; she would hardly allow herself to form a suspicion that deceit or perfidy were intended, yet she thought the papers of such infinite importance, that she shuddered at the idea of their passing into other hands, and reflected with an anxiety her own probity condemned, that she was delivering an indubitable testimony of the innocence of de Saint Ouin, into the power of the Comte’s most approved friend. Ashamed however of acknowledging her fears even to herself, she went slowly to her own apartment, and insensibly prolonged the time of opening her escrutore, and searching for the letters, until Madame de Germeil impatient at her delay, sent to hasten her.

In returning as she passed the staircase, she heard the Marquis’s voice in the hall, inquiring for Madame de Germeil: Laure waited ’till he was conducted up stairs, and immediately followed him into the room, when going up to him with quickness, ‘Madame de Germeil,’ said she, putting the papers into his hands, ‘wishes to see these.’

Without deliberating a moment, he presented them to her; she took them with apparent complacency, and having looked over them for a few minutes returned them to de Saint Ouin. Laure then withdrew, very well satisfied with the termination of an affair so delicate; and the Marquis did not stay long after she had quitted the room.

When Adeline returned she told Madame de Germeil she had met the Duke of Harmington, who had announced his intention of calling the next day.

‘Imagine to yourself, my dear Laure,’ continued Mademoiselle D’Ogimond, laughing, ‘the poor Duke making the most ridiculous mistake! Mrs. Malvert gave me a written sonnet to read aloud, and when I returned it to her she put it in her pocket, and threw the envelope on the table; the Duke fancying it was the sonnet, took it up, and waving his head backwards and forwards as if he were reading, bestowed on the blank cover all the admiration he meant for its contents.’

Madame de Germeil checked the mirth of Adeline, with an asperity she now practised on many occasions; and desired her to think of the Duke of Harmington as the friend of her father, and not consider him in any other view. Mademoiselle D’Ogimond appeared much mortified at the reprehension, and was silent. The ill-humour of Madame de Germeil was only removed by the presence of de Saint Ouïn, who returned at the dinner hour. Laure’s spirits revived at his entrance, and he too dismissed part of his melancholy at the welcome they bestowed on him.

Madame de Germeil was the whole evening all condescension and courtesy: the presence of Adeline precluded every idea of entering on the hateful subject that could alone have discomposed her. The gloom gradually vanished from the countenance of de Saint Ouïn, and Laure was delighted to see him apparently less unhappy: He stayed until Madame de Germeil prepared to retire, and then took his leave as usual with reluctance.

## CHAP. VII.

MADAME de L'ARMINIERE a French lady, who was in the habits of intimacy with Madame de Germeil, and the young ladies, called the next day, and observing that she meant very shortly to make the tour of England, pressed them with earnestness to accompany her.

The Duke of Harmington, who had just entered, seconded the proposal very warmly; he asserted that Madame de Germeil would certainly find a change of air beneficial to her health, and offered a variety of propos en l'air to prove it. 'Should you determine,' continued he, 'in favor of the excursion, I hope to obtain permission to meet you often in your route, and be allowed the honor of directing your attention to such objects as are most worthy of engaging it.'

Madame de Germeil professed herself much flattered with the interest his Grace took in her welfare; but waved her assent to the proposition, until she had given it some consideration. She was far from being the dupe of his pretended zeal for her health, which she properly attributed to the attractions of her pupils; and she chose to encourage his admiration by displaying their accomplishments. — Laure sung in a superior stile, and the old Duke was much captivated with the harmony and extent of her voice, which Mademoiselle D'Ogimond accompanied on the harp.

While they were thus occupied Lord William Dalvening was announced, who was not much delighted with the rapturous expressions of applause that fell from the lips of the Duke. It is true he entertained the modest idea, that there existed but few men whose merits could be placed in competition with his own; but he imagined that the Comte meant to dispose of his daughter and Laure to the best advantage, and he was not singular in this opinion.

Lord William had sent very constantly while Madame de Germeil remained indisposed, and hearing she was better, he went immediately in person to obtain her interest with Laure in his behalf, and was not a little chagrined at finding her so engaged as to make it improbable that he should be heard that morning; he was not deceived in this conjecture, and retired with a discomposure of temper, that was very apparent, and on which Laure and her friend expatiated when they were alone, without much indulgence. In the evening Madame de Germeil received a note from him, requesting a conference the next morning. She assented to his demand, and observing to Laure, that it was not difficult to imagine what would be his subject, desired to learn if she still continued to think unfavorably of him. Laure readily affirmed that her opinion was unchanged. Madame de Germeil then replied with great condescension, that she would acquaint him with it.

The disappointment was softened to Lord William as much as possible; yet he received it with a mixed surprise and displeasure, he was at no pains to conceal, and left the house in sullen discontent.

The Duke became remarkably assiduous, in his attendance on Madame de Germeil, which so much gratified her, that she no longer withheld her consent to the proposed tour, which it was agreed should take place in a fortnight.

Neither Adeline nor Laure were much delighted with the prospect of this expedition: they did not dare to betray the least symptom of dislike to the Duke in the presence of Madame de Germeil, who defended him with very despotic arguments: Madame de L'Arminiere they thought a very good kind of a woman, but not an amusing companion. Adeline felt concerned at leaving her friend de Saint Ouin in London, and Laure was still more grieved on reflecting that he was not in a state of mind to relish its amusements, or enlarge the circle of his acquaintance.

One morning as she was seated in the drawing-room, thinking more upon this subject than any other, he entered: A ray of pleasure illumined his countenance on seeing her alone. 'My dear little friend,' he exclaimed, 'I have been three days anxiously wishing for such an opportunity as this. I have received a letter from my father; will you interest yourself so far about me as to give me your opinion on what it contains?'——

'Perhaps,' said Laure, 'I may not have time to do that, and read it too, before we are interrupted; tell me then as much of it as you think proper.'

'My father insists,' replied the Marquis,——'but I had rather you would read.'

'What does he insist?' asked Laure.

'That I loudly justify myself,' returned he, 'which I can only do by criminating the Comte. He renounces me if I hesitate, and at the same time tells me, he had already begun to clear my character by exposing the fact. What does the lovely Laure advise me to do?'

'How can I counsel you?' she replied much distressed, 'I am the last person in the world——did you not say your father would renounce you?'

'He affirms it most solemnly,' returned de Saint Ouin, 'but will you not hate me, Laure if I obey him?'

'Why should I contemn you for doing yourself justice?' she replied, 'I might indeed hate you, had you been capable of the crimes so unjustly imputed to you.'

'You think then I had better——'

'Oh do not ask me,' interrupted she, 'what can I say?'

'But I must then relinquish the sight of you,' said de Saint Ouin mournfully, 'for Madame de Germeil will keep no terms with me, when I tell her the measures I mean to

pursue. Neither indeed ought I to appear in any degree connected with her; and yet to give up the happiness of sometimes seeing and conversing with you, is an effort that nothing could enable me to make, but the horror of that infamy to which the treacherous Comte would otherwise doom me.'

Laure who had felt some confusion during this speech, now forgot it in her anxiety for the fate of the Comte. 'What will become of him?' she cried.

'I have been informed,' said the Marquis, 'and I have every reason to believe, that the strength of his party is so great and its credit so high in Paris, that it will shield him from any injury or punishment that could be inflicted on him from the discovery, without such a powerful support. But tell me, too charming Laure, will you sometimes spare a thought to the unhappy de Saint Ouin?'

'Why should I not?' she replied, 'do you think me capricious?'

'Oh, no, no,' returned he with enthusiasm, 'you are all goodness, and perfection.'

'I do not recollect,' said Laure with a smile, 'that I called for so high a compliment: Do you know that Madame de Germeil has consented to the travelling plan?'

'No, I did not,' replied he hastily, 'who is your party?'

'Only Madame L'Arminiere,' returned Laure, 'and the Duke of Harmington, who meets us sometimes en route.'

De Saint Ouin appeared thoughtful and made no reply.

'We shall set out I believe in less than a fortnight,' she added.

'I ought to determine,' said de Saint Ouin with a sigh, 'to quit London immediately. Perhaps,' added he, taking her hand, 'I shall then see you no more; and after a time, I am afraid, you will cease to think of me.'

Laure had not fortitude to sustain the idea of a lasting separation, and burst into tears. Such a sight made him forget the restraint he had with difficulty imposed upon himself, and he avowed for her a passion, which he affirmed had begun almost in childhood. This declaration overwhelmed the mind of Laure with a sensation far different from that she had experienced when Lord William had addressed her on the same subject, and she was for some time unable to utter a syllable.

At length when he urged her forgiveness for a discovery so ill timed, her silence, her looks, and manner, all revealed that she had not heard him with displeasure, and his importunity soon induced her to acknowledge it. The idea of his situation and misfortunes was lost in the transport of this confession, and he was ardently thanking her for the

happiness it had conferred upon him, when Laure heard somebody advance from the anti-room, and conscious of an agitation, she did not dare to account for, hastily escaped by another door and gained her own chamber.

Here while she ruminated with a mixture of pleasure and anxiety on what had passed, a reflection arose that embittered her satisfaction, and redoubled her care: Would it not be thought that she conspired with the enemies of the Count to injure him, were it known that she had any correspondence with de Saint Ouïn. She could not support the idea of concealment and intrigue, and yet she thought it would be the utmost injustice to slight and condemn the attachment of the Marquis for no other reason, but that he had been cruelly and basely betrayed. She quickly turned from a subject she could not consider without feeling a horror for the Comte that amounted to detestation.

Laure had ever been attached to de Saint Ouïn with the most lively friendship, and since he had been in England, it was much increased by the tender compassion she felt for his unmerited wrongs. After much deliberation, she determined to apply once more to Madame de Germeil, to be informed of the circumstances of her birth, and the motive of the interest the Comte had taken in her destiny.

Should she persist in declaring that she was unable to answer her inquiry, she resolved to appeal to the Comte himself for information; and if he avowed himself her father, unworthy as he was of the sacrifice, she meant to give up de Saint Ouïn; though the determination was agony to her mind, newly awaken'd to the softest emotions of grateful love. She learnt at dinner by the serenity of Madame de Germeil's countenance, that she was not yet acquainted with the intention of the Marquis, and she was not sorry he had delayed informing her of it, because she could not give up the hope of seeing him once again.

## CHAP. VIII.

SCARCELY a day now passed without being marked by some attention of the Duke, or of which he did not spend some part with them: Mrs. Grenby heard of this extraordinary attendance, and wrote to Madame de Germeil to learn which was the fortunate object of his particular admiration; for she observed he had never been suspected of laying so regular a siege to the heart of any woman, as it was now imagined he did to one of the trio in Park-Lane.

The Marquis de Saint Ouïn, not daring to hope that he might again have the good fortune to find Laure alone, put a letter into her hand the first time he called after the tête-à-tête, unobserved by Adeline who was in the room. She opened it, not without fear and trepidation, when she found herself alone. He thanked her with all the fervor of the sincerest gratitude for the indulgence with which she had listened to him, and said that he would only entreat to receive one letter from her, as he should be miserable, were he to involve her in his disgrace and difficulties, from drawing her into a correspondence with him at the present crisis; and he would defer speaking to Madame de Germeil until she had honored him with an answer. He then proceeded to inform her of his plan, which was to leave Valain in England when he left it, that he might sometimes have the consolation of hearing of her, and by this method, if she would allow it, she might learn his fate. He concluded with telling her, that the approaching separation, was softened by a firm and ardent hope, that she might at a future period, find herself at liberty to follow the dictates of the sensibility and compassion she had so sweetly manifested for him.

Though Laure did not comprehend by what means Valain was to communicate to her any intelligence of the Marquis, yet she was pleased with the idea that she should not be entirely precluded from the possibility of hearing of his welfare. In her answer she imparted to him her resolution of learning her origin, either from Madame de Germeil or the Comte, and acknowledged her fears, that it would not be what the Marquis his father would approve in any degree.

When de Saint Ouïn had received this letter, he determined immediately to inform Madame de Germeil of his resolution, respecting the Comte. She was confounded at the firmness he displayed, and earnestly endeavoured by a variety of arguments to shake his purpose. She represented to him the inevitable ruin to which he would expose the Comte, his loss of fortune, fame, and life.

De Saint Ouïn replied, though with much temper, that he had lately discovered but too surely, the strength of the party which the Comte headed, to fear on his account any personal danger from the discovery of his villany, that his ruin could be effected only by the repeated and vigorous efforts of a set of men, whose penetration would discover his duplicity, and whose probity would abhor it, and he would have many opportunities of escaping from justice, provided he did not draw it too suddenly on his head, by a rapid succession of plots and conspiracies.



Madame de Germeil foreseeing in the high credit and power of the old Marquis a formidable source of uneasiness, laid aside the reserve she had 'till now in some measure preserved.

'Come, come, de Saint Ouin,' said she, 'I know very well the reason that you have hitherto temporized. I am authorized to promise you the hand of your favorite Laure, if you will live quietly in England, and take no more notice of this affair.'

He returned to her proposition a look of the highest indignation.

'This offer,' continued she, 'will be made to you no more, if you reject it look to yourself.'

'I shall,' replied he, with a contempt he could not restrain, 'and if your good friend the Comte, a second time, attempts my life, I trust that he will a second time fail.'

As he uttered this he left the room, and Madame de Germeil was too much confounded to make any effort to prevent him. When she recovered her recollection, she instantly dispatched the substance of this conversation to the Comte; and lamenting to him the fatal precipitation with which he usually acted, advised him to pursue such measures as she pointed out, to extricate himself from the effects of what she called his imprudence. Yet she now scarcely hoped that he would have wisdom enough to profit by the coolness of her judgment, as she found her counsel generally counteracted by his weakness and impetuosity, when it was not enforced by her presence.

Her next task was to compose her countenance, and veil her emotion from every eye; in this she so well succeeded, that Laure, who watched every look with the most solicitous observance, could not perceive any departure from her usual serenity; but she judged that the explanation must have taken place by the continued absence of de Saint Ouin: A week had now passed and he had never made his appearance. Adeline had been told that he had left town, and expressed herself astonished at the cold rudeness of his neglect, in not calling to take leave.

Laure, who felt restless and unsettled when she no longer hoped to see the Marquis, found some relief in the prospect of the approaching journey; she was disappointed however in the effect she expected from it: Change of place sometimes alleviated her ennui, but it could never dissipate it; and when she had travelled some hundred miles, she was glad to obtain a respite from continual motion.

Madame de Germeil was prevailed with to make a short stay at Harrogate: it was now the latter end of June, and the place so remarkably crowded that they could only find accommodation at one of the hotels, where every guest dines without discrimination at the same table; and as Madame de Germeil purposed only to stay a few days, she submitted, though with much reluctance to this regulation.

They arrived late in the evening, and used the privilege allowed to travellers of supping in private. Their equipage and suit had awakened universal attention: what at such a place is termed an arrival, is never a slight event to the loungers, with which it is usually over-run; but the new guests caused an unusual commotion, which was not in the least diminished when inquiry had illustrated their rank.

Two or three gentlemen sauntering near the door, when the carriages first stopped, had taken a survey of the young ladies, and made a report which though it was thought extravagant, effectually discomposed the fair-one, who had 'till then been in possession of the apple. Every man who was not soured into apathy by gout, or rheumatism, palsy or dropsy, rose an hour before his accustomed time, in the hope of getting a peep at his new neighbours; and every woman who had the most distant pretensions to youth, or beauty, left her chamber full five minutes sooner than usual for the same purpose; but in vain. The strangers fatigued with the length of their journey the day before, slept very composedly until late, and then breakfasted by themselves. At length when the curiosity of the expectants had been blunted by disappointment, they gave up the point from lassitude, and endeavoured to find out another amusement or occupation.

When Madame de Germeil and her party entered the dining-room, they were greeted with respect by their eating associates, who complimented them with the upper seats, a mark of attention very seldom bestowed; for strangers, however high their rank, are generally permitted to take the last and most inconvenient place in the room, and rise to distinction and ease by seniority alone, a hint which was very probably taken from certain illustrious seminaries of wisdom and virtue.

On one side of Laure was placed the Duke of Harmington, and on the other, a Baronet not less distinguished for the antiquity of his family than for the urbanity of his manners, and the steady rectitude of his character. He was nearly seventy; a little, active, spare man, of a lively aspect, which exhibited the most invincible good humour. He was charmed with the soft modesty with which Laure returned his salutation, and entered into conversation with her with a freedom, his age and inoffensive demeanour amply tolerated.

Opposed to him in situation, as in many other things, was his comely wife, coarse in her person, and immensely fat. She was considerably younger than Sir Edward; but made what is usually termed a good wife, that is, she never intrigued with any other man; probably because the passion of gaming, which she indulged in the extreme, absorbed every other. To this she had sacrificed beauty and constitution. The Duke had attended some of her parties, in the last of the few winters she had passed in town, where her husband notwithstanding his unbounded indulgence in every other respect, seldom allowed her to go: in this, as in a few other instances, he displayed a firmness, that surprised all those who were well acquainted with the natural docility of his temper.

Madame de Germeil in compliment to the Duke, engaged Sir Edward and Lady Lockyer to pass the evening with them: after supper cards were proposed and immediately accepted; and Lady Lockyer soon engaged the Duke to bet with her to a

considerable amount: on these occasions, she would never suffer Sir Edward to play, yet she chose to keep him close to her elbow, and appeal to him when she lost any capital sum, against the injustice of fortune. He would have endured the confinement without repining, had she suffered him to sleep quietly on his post; but the duty was rendered more severe, from being obliged to sooth her anxiety, which was never moderate, and answer to every distinct exclamation. Unwilling to exasperate her, by an omission of these ceremonies, and at the same time unable to set several hours in total inactivity, and not “steep his senses in forgetfulness,” he acquired a habit of hearing and answering her without discontinuing his slumbers; and the better to secure them from interruption, he usually contrived to place himself nearly behind her chair.

Not dreaming of disaster, Sir Edward had began his evening nap, when the Duke made a bet of five hundred pounds with Lady Lockyer, in which the odds appeared much in her favor; but by an unlucky turn of fortune, or the mal-address of the lady, she lost it in less than two seconds; stung with vexation, she instantly spread the cards on the table, and insisted upon making Sir Edward comprehend the hardship of the thing, and the several reasons she had to hope it would have been otherwise. Either his sleep at that moment happened to be more profound than usual, and his answer less alert, or her agitation making her turn short upon him in the midst of her demonstration, discovered the unlucky subterfuge at a moment when her patience already very much irritated, gave way entirely to the provocation: she threw the cards in Sir Edward’s face, and reproached him so vehemently with supineness and duplicity, that he was touched with remorse, and paid the unlucky bett to atone for the offence.

The compassion of every individual was so strongly engaged for the poor husband, that it checked the risibility the scene occasioned. He was obliged to set the remainder of the evening with his eyes strained asunder like a newly started hare, to convince his inexorable wife of his determination to sin no more.

## CHAP. IX.

THE next morning the Duke proposed to conduct the ladies to Fort Montague, a very high rock on the bank of a river, commanding a charming view; but the natural beauties of the spot, though very attractive, would not have been sufficiently powerful perhaps, to have excited the attention of the numbers that crowded to see and admire it, had it not been disfigured and celebrated by the industry of a poor weaver, who had in the intervals of his work at the loom, by painful and laborious gradations, cut a habitation in this rock for himself and his family.

He had finished the first story when he was seized with his last illness, and conjured his son not to abandon the project; but to finish a second and third, which the height of the rock would very well admit of.

The son had improved on the plan and cut the summit of his castle into battlements, which were accommodated with wooden guns, and decorated on gala-days with a flag. The garden had been formed with equal labour, for every particle of mould it contained, had been carried to it from the distance of half a mile, by the joint efforts of the weaver and an ass: it was adorned with numberless arbours, formed of bent osier twigs, encircled with scarlet beans, for the accommodation of the company from Harrogate, who went in parties to drink tea, and from every set, the happy weaver received a gratification.

As the Duke could not venture to accompany the young ladies who chose to walk, he sent with them one of his servants who was acquainted with the place; Madame L'Arminiere chaperoned them, and the Duke conducted Madame de Germeil in his curricule.

The day was cool and pleasant, and the party on foot delighted at being liberated from the confinement of a close carriage, were much pleased with their walk. When they had proceeded about two-thirds of the way, they were met by half a dozen young men on horseback, and one of them instantly recognizing the livery of the Duke, concluded from his known character, that the ladies his servant attended, were proper subjects for a certain easy kind of conversation, and accosted them without much ceremony; at the same moment the countenance of Laure catching his eye, he alighted from his horse, and with an oath of surprise attempted to walk by her side.

Unused to such familiar treatment, and terrified at the brutal stare of this uncivil intruder, who was more than half intoxicated, though it was yet early in the day, Laure stopt, and the Duke's servant interfered, but with much respect. The gentleman swore at him vehemently, and offered to box him, his companions eagerly seconded this absurd proposal, and surrounding the fellow, insisted that he should strip.

He urged with much propriety, the necessity of executing his master's commands, which must be neglected if he complied with their demand. A young Irishman of the

party now interposed, and asserting that the man's observation was very just, said, he ought to be suffered to proceed.

The frolic, however was found too excellent to be relinquished, they remarked that the ladies had another servant with them, and agreed that *la lanterne*, the name they bestowed on Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's footman, might very well take care of them.

The Frenchman perceiving the inebriety of the adverse party, and finding that they detained his comrade against his will, with more gallantry than wit, attempted his rescue, and was immediately thrown over an hedge into a deep ditch on the opposite side, where he lay up to his chin in mud, roaring with terror and vexation.

The young man who had persuaded his companions to desist, ashamed of appearing a party in so indecent an outrage, advanced to Madame L'Arminiere, and addressing her in french, observed that the aggressors were not in a state to be argued with, and begged that she would allow him the honor of escorting her and her friends, where they wished to go.

By this time *Babtiste* had scrambled back over the hedge, and appeared with a forlorn lengthened visage, scratched with briars, and disfigured with mud; a portion of which he drew into his open mouth and nostrils with his breath, which surprise anger and dismay had almost deprived him of.—Madame L'Arminiere saw that it would be impossible to detain him in this unhappy situation, and Adeline dismissed him with an injunction to hasten home and take care of himself. The loud laugh of his spirited persecutors followed him until he was out of hearing.

The Duke's servant finding he could not disengage himself, prepared to comply with their brutal caprice, and Madame L'Arminiere very much distressed accepted the proposal of the young Irishman, which he again repeated with increasing respect: she thought of returning to Harrogate, but being reminded by Laure that Madame de Germeil would be alarmed if they did not appear at the appointed time, they proceeded to Fort Montague, which was not a mile from the place of their disaster.

By the way, their conductor, eager to avert the censure arising from being found in such company, informed the ladies that he was overtaken by them, on his way to Harrogate: two of them he acknowledged to be his friends, who would be very much mortified, he said, when they recovered their reason, at the disgrace they had incurred. He learnt from them, he added, that they had been to Knaresborough, to meet some officers quartered there, and had set drinking the whole night.

When the ladies reached the place of appointment, they found Madame de Germeil and the Duke looking out for them with much impatience; they had waited half an hour beyond the time which the walk could have possibly taken, and their surprise at seeing them arrive accompanied by a stranger, and without an attendant, was very evident. Madame L'Arminiere explained the cause of the substitution, and the Duke was struck dumb with rage and indignation; but though he lost the use of his tongue, it was

not thus with his teeth, which he unhappily gnashed in the heat of his resentment, with such vehemence, that they were utterly discomposed with the shock, and fell from their station in great disorder; filling his mouth which he kept fast closed, so completely, that he was nearly choaked by a straggler that popt into his throat. The more distressing his situation became, the less was he inclined to make it known; his only hope of escaping a mortification so intolerable, was by a sudden flight.

The young Irishman whose name was Fitzpier, had observed the first flash of indignation that had animated the Duke's countenance, and attributed the succeeding emotion to an increase of resentment: he lamented the insult but gently insinuated its extenuation, from the excessive intoxication of the offenders. Before the conclusion of his harrangue, the Duke was obliged to determine upon an expeditious retreat, and turning his back suddenly on the whole company, marched off at a very quick pace. The ladies astonished at this unaccountable desertion, looked at each other in silence, and Mr. Fitzpier entreated that they would generously endeavour to mitigate the wrath of the Duke, which would otherwise fall heavily on his two thoughtless friends, whose only expectation of promotion in the army, he well knew, was derived from the interest of his Grace's political connexions. He then followed him, to inforce the doctrine of forgiveness of injuries; for he was seriously alarmed lest in the first transports of his anger, the Duke on discovering the names of the aggressors, should blast their rising fortunes for ever.

Fitzpier soon overtook him, for the Duke was obliged to halt a little to recover breath, when he had trotted about a hundred paces; he had just deposited his teeth in his pocket, and the young man's gravity was rather discomposed at the uncommon appearance his face exhibited: it was puckered into a variety of wrinkles, every one of which meeting at his mouth, made the figure of a star with a line directed to every point of the compass. The Duke mumbled something, which he meant as an apology for the abruptness of his retreat, and Fitzpier then began to suspect some part of the fact.

When his Grace arrived at the spot where he had left his carriage, he dispatched a servant to Madame de Germeil, to say he would rejoin her in ten minutes; he then proceeded to a small inn to adjust the inconvenient *derangement* he had undergone, and this ceremony over, he returned to the ladies; Fitzpier had in this short time so well pleaded the cause of his friends, that the Duke consented to wave his resentment and accept an apology, he even interceded with Madame de Germeil that he might be permitted to join the party, which was readily granted at his request. They had no reason to repent their condescension, for they found him sensible and amiable, his manners were polite, and his attention respectful.

Madame de Germeil sent for a carriage, the ladies returned together to Harrogate, and the Duke took his new favorite with him into his curricule.

As they rode up a Lane leading to the green, their attention was very forcibly called to a figure they discovered to be General Williams, who was walking, not in a very soldierly style, though he constantly faced to the right and left alternately at every step, and took up as much space in the road as a baggage waggon: sauntering very leisurely in

a narrow part of it, a ragged sailor, who had found some difficulty in passing him, asked rather impatiently, what the devil he made so many tacks for, when he might run right before the wind if he chose it? The General took no further notice of the question, than by drawing a handful of silver from his pocket, and throwing it in the dirt, at the man's feet. 'I shall take your money,' said the sailor, stooping to pick it up, 'because I want it to mend my rigging; but I think as how master, you might as well have handed it over to me.'

Every body who was in hearing of the reproof, smiled at it, which did not however discompose the solemn importance of the general's countenance. He stopt the Duke's curricule to speak to Mr. Fitzpier, and detained it until Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's carriage came up, which was equally obliged to stop from the narrowness of the road, and disregarding Fitzpier's observation of the obstruction they occasioned, stuck his foot on the wheel, and his hands under his arms, and continued talking, while a formidable string was collecting in the rear; for it was near the general dinner hour, and every body was hurrying home to dress. He then stretched out his neck with some marks of satisfaction, to see how far the cavalcade reached, and Fitzpier provoked at his deliberate insolence, called out hastily, 'fare you well, general, take care of your foot!' The Duke took the hint and drove on, while the general, without moving an inch from the spot, stood until the carriages had gone by, though they were every one actually within half a foot of his nose as they passed.

## CHAP. X.

IN the evening there was a dance as usual, at one of the houses, and Madame de Germeil being too much an invalid to bear the heat of a crowded room, entrusted the care of the young ladies to her friend. Mr. Fitzpier who had been since the morning formally introduced to the whole party, by a nobleman of his own country, well known to Madame de Germeil and the Duke, engaged Laure's hand for the evening, and the vivacity of his conversation, co-operating with her favorite exercise, recalled to his fair partner's eyes some part of the life and gaiety which had lately deserted them. He told her that his friends regretted most poignantly the outrage their ill-chosen companions had led them to commit, and they had commissioned him to assure the ladies they had so grossly offended, of their shame and penitence for what had happened.

'I think,' said Laure with great sweetness, 'that contrition will always entitle a moderate offender to forgiveness: I readily grant them mine, and if,' continued she smiling, 'your intercession to Madame L'Arminiere meets with a success as rapid as that you employed to soften the Duke, your friends may rejoice in having so able an advocate.'

'My argument to the Duke,' replied Fitzpier laughing, 'had the merit of being quite an impromptu; but unhappily it is of such a peculiar nature, that I cannot make use of it to any other person.' He then related the adventure of the teeth, which he said the Duke could not contrive to conceal from him, and he had made advantage of the discovery, by hinting to his Grace, that if he intended to resent their behaviour, it would be advisable to prevent this event from reaching their knowledge. 'I must confess,' added Fitzpier, 'that I believe there was a kind of tacit agreement between us, which I am perhaps infringing, by entrusting *you* with the secret, who are the last person in the world, he would wish to have it known to; but I could not otherwise account for this wonderful effect of my eloquence, which I do not chuse that you should impute to art magic.'

Adeline had been alarmed lest the Duke should propose dancing with her, and did not hesitate to decide that she should much prefer sitting still the whole evening; but he, who was in truth *fearfully* and *wonderfully made*, cautiously eluded every subject that could possibly lead to a proposal so dangerous, and Mademoiselle D'Ogimond was not at all displeased at his wary reserve, especially as the young Earl of —— was substituted in his place.

When the dance was over, Laure happened to take a seat near General Williams, who possessing a person very well adapted for the purpose, had stretched himself into the figure of a crucified punch; suddenly however starting from his position, he recollected that he was thirsty, and called for water, which was brought to him; but he found it entirely unpalatable, and not fit to be drank, and desired the waiter to dispatch his groom to London, with orders to convey immediately to his master a dozen bottles of water from C—lt—n—House.



‘General,’ said Fitzpier, ‘when you have once set the fellow going, do let him turn a little out of his way, and dip a flask in the *Ganges* for me.’

The laugh this sally occasioned, was not subsided, when Sir Edward’s notability not permitting him to miss what he thought an excellent opportunity of getting several commissions of his own executed without expence, he called out eagerly, ‘My good Sir, if you send to London—excuse the liberty I take—but it would be of such singular convenience to me—and you know it is so difficult to spare a servant from his particular occupation, let it be what it will he is always wanted in it—now my dear Sir, I give a grand entertainment next week at Lockyer-Place, and my Lady, who is to be sure a very fine woman, — but she leaves all these things entirely to me, and I fancy I may affirm without being vain of it, that I have a tolerable knack of conducting such matters: indeed I have an excellent cook, a very excellent cook! I don’t say a word against the kitchen maids, I believe them to be very good girls: indeed I chuse all the women servants myself, Lady Lockyer will have nothing to do with it, and one and all they are excellent girls, one and all ——’

Galled as the General had been by the shaft Fitzpier had let fly at him, he lost all patience at this tedious harrangue, which branched out in a style that precluded all possibility of its ever coming to a point, and was uttered in the same tone and key used to itinerant bears and dancing dogs. He damned all the excellent girls together, not forgetting however to particularize the cook and kitchen maids; and in the latter part of the ejaculation he included their master, to round off the sentence with proper emphasis and dignity. He then rose from his seat which chanced to be the extremity of a covered bench, that had at the same moment the honor of supporting Lady Lockyer, who placed quite at the other end, was making her cassino party with such eagerness and alacrity, that she was entirely ignorant of the arrangement Sir Edward was endeavouring to make, for the benefit of the grand entertainment at Lockyer-Place. The instant the General moved from his station, the bench losing all kind of equilibrium, fell suddenly with her Ladyship; and the opposite end rising with proportionate velocity, struck him a furious blow on the right shoulder, as he was wheeling half round to take his first step. Good heavens, what excessive indignation trembled on his lip, and darted from his eye! This was not a moment for reflection, so he seized the innocent Sir Edward, from whom he imagined he had received the blow, and retorted it with almost equal violence.

Every sound was now lost in an universal peal of laughter, which incensed the General to continue the exercise; but Sir Edward recovering a little from his astonishment, at this unexpected attack, skipped from side to side with infinite address and agility, and without losing his temper, expostulated, intreated and explained, with such volubility and perseverance, that Fitzpier, when his convulsion was a little subsided, rescued him before he had received a second blow, much to the disappointment of Lady Lockyer, who having been raised from the ground, was making a bett on the strength of Sir Edward’s activity, that his opponent would not be able to strike him more than once in two minutes.

The moment he was released, he joined very freely in the laugh he had himself occasioned, without any resentment against the General, who forgot the ceremony of offering an apology, and not chusing to wait the result of his water embassy to C—lt—on-House, left the place early the next morning.

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## CHAP. XI.

THE second day after the dance Laure accompanied Madame L'Arminiere in a tête-à-tête walk: on their return, they were met a quarter of a mile from the house by Fitzpier and the Duke of Harmington, the former securing the pleasure of escorting Laure, left to the Duke the honor of conducting her companion, and very politely giving them the *pas*, detained Laure a few paces behind.

'I was yesterday at Knaresborough,' said he in a low voice, 'where I met very unexpectedly, a friend of mine who has the happiness of being known to you.'

'Who can it be?' cried Laure, with an emotion she could not account for.

'Who can it be,' repeated he significantly, 'but de Saint Ouïn!'

Laure started, the colour retreated from her cheeks and again returned with redoubled glow, her inquiring eye rose for an instant, and sunk again to the ground in the most painful confusion.

Fitzpier was hurt at the distress he had occasioned; but fearful of losing the opportunity of the present moment, as they were very near the house, he put a letter into her hand, without uttering a syllable.

The reluctance of Laure to receive it by the intervention of a young man, who was almost a stranger to her, was considerably increased by an emotion almost of resentment, which she felt at the idea of having been betrayed to him; and her opened hand rejected the offered letter indignantly.

Fitzpier alarmed for the success of his enterprize, put on an irresistible look of good-humoured supplication, and earnestly entreated her not to aggravate the misery of his friend by such cruelty. 'Resolve to be merciful,' he added, 'and resolve quickly; for if you will not take the letter, I shall be under the necessity of applying to some nymph less fair but more obliging; I shall never have courage enough to give de Saint Ouïn the mortification of seeing it returned to him, so I must deliver it to somebody.'

At this minute the Duke half stopping turned his head, and Madame L'Arminiere mechanically following his example, Laure could make no further resistance, and hastily put the letter out of sight. Fitzpier satisfied with the advantage he had gained, marched up to Madame L'Arminiere, and they all entered the house together.

When Laure retired to dress for dinner, the letter was drawn twenty times from her pocket, and replaced with a repeated determination to return it to Fitzpier the first opportunity. She looked attentively at the address, and was well assured the writing was de Saint Ouïn's. Insensibly the examination was in two minutes renewed, and the contemplation of the seal was still a more fascinating amusement; it produced a very

courageous and firm intention of writing immediately to the Comte; for Madame de Germeil still evaded giving her the information she so ardently wished, of the motive of her elevation into his family.

Laure was much terrified lest Madame de Germeil or Adeline should discover by means of the servants that de Saint Ouin was so near them. The delicacy of her friendship was wounded, when she thought of the impossibility of confiding her anxiety to the unsuspecting Adeline, whose misfortune in having such a father as the Comte, excited her tenderest pity: a minute's reflection on this subject brought the letter back again to her hand, she hesitated; to return it unopened she thought would appear unkind and contemptuous, and yet she could not shut her eyes on the impropriety of de Saint Ouin's conduct, in thus preserving a communication with her, while she was still under the immediate protection of the Comte D'Ogimond. So much time had elapsed in irresolution that before she had decided on what was to be done, she was obliged to appear at dinner.

Fitzpier's manner was the whole day so particularly delicate and respectful, that Laure felt in a small degree reconciled to the idea of his knowing her prepossession for the Marquis, which she had tormented herself with thinking he had certainly guessed.

In the evening when Madame de Germeil's attention was engaged, he seized an opportunity of asking Laure to favor him with a commission to Knaresborough, which he intended to take in his ride, he said, the next morning. 'And pray,' added he smiling, 'let it be a letter; but observe, I shall only be inclined to carry a single sheet of paper, and if the address is not properly written, and should not have the good fortune to please me, I am such a strange fellow that I shall probably not charge myself with it.'

'I beg, Mr. Fitzpier,' said Laure with a deep blush, 'that you will have the goodness to take back the paper you left in my hands this morning.'

Fitzpier made no answer, and suddenly quitting the window at which they had been standing, Laure had no further opportunity of speaking to him. She found he was resolved not to return the letter; and her inability to convey it to de Saint Ouin by any other method, and still more the dangerous circumstance of being again at liberty to contemplate the seal and address alternately, were so much in favor of the Marquis that at length she could no longer resist her inclination to open it.

"Before you condemn me, my too charming Laure," said de Saint Ouin, "let me inform you that I have been two miserable days in this place, without daring to see you, or imparting the anxiety and terror, by which I was urged to trespass once more on that amiable condescension, which has already so sweetly soothed my misery.

Harrassed by disappointment, and fearful of approaching too near, as Valain whom I commissioned to watch, assured me I could not speak to you without being discovered, I yesterday recognised the worthy Fitzpier, whom I knew intimately at Paris. He was surprised to meet me here, and demanded if I was informed of my vicinity to Madame de Germeil and the enchanting Laure. Will you forgive me for making use of his

attachment to me, which I have more than once proved, to convey to you the motives which impelled me to follow you to this place.

I have already hinted to my Laure that I knew Madame de Germeil to be capable of entering on any plan, and assisting in any scheme, to gratify the ambition of the Comte or promote his designs, however unjustifiable: guess then my uneasiness, my distraction, when I every where heard, nay I even read in the public prints, that my Laure and Mademoiselle D'Ogimond were inmates of the Duke of Harmington.

Instead of hastening from England to my father, who expects me with impatience, I flew hither. I find indeed the report is malicious and unjust; but I find at the same time, that this Duke is your eternal companion. O Laure, do not permit the infamous schemes of one wretch, who employs the beauty of an angel to accomplish his diabolical plans, or the shameful connivance of another, tempt or betray you to the misery of uniting yourself to so contemptible a character. Once more I implore you to forgive me; reflect on the anxiety I have suffered, an anxiety founded on a knowledge of the characters of the Count D'Ogimond and this woman.

I have told Fitzpier that I dare not hope for the honor of an answer; yet should you generously incline to grant me such an indulgence, believe me you may confide in him, for his mind is associated with almost every virtue.

Amiable as he is and with such a character, I should be alarmed at the admiration he avows for my angelic Laure, did I not know that he is tenderly attached to an engaging woman of his own country.”

This was the substance of de Saint Ouin's letter. Laure was amazed at the warmth of his expression in mentioning the report he had heard, for she knew not the venom it contained was all directed at her; nor did he chuse to shock her by relating the embellishments with which it was introduced to the public eye. Inexperienced and unsuspecting as she was, she had already thought it strange that the constant attendance of the Duke was so fully permitted, nay even authorized, and was often vexed and confused at his pointed attentions to herself.

Madame de Germeil certainly encouraged his absurd gallantry, without taking the trouble of investigating the effect it might have on Laure, who found consolation from remarking that his expressions of admiration, though usually extravagant and rapturous, were vague and unmeaning. But Adeline pretended to think otherwise, and when alone with her friend, sportively called her *Madame la Duchesse*.

Laure now recollected, that Madame de Germeil had with-held her assent to the dismissal of Lord William, until the Duke became so remarkably assiduous, and reviewing the conduct of Madame de Germeil from that period, acknowledged that it might very well have created the same suspicion manifested by de Saint Ouin, in a less interested observer. She saw however no reason to imagine the Duke was associated in the plan: on the contrary she flattered herself, that all his gallantry and admiration were

grimace, nor would the artful encouragement of Madame de Germeil, she hoped, nurture them to any thing more serious.

She was not however so composed when she considered the consequences of de Saint Ouin's deferred departure from England, when the old Marquis was so eagerly expecting him in France; and to remove him at such a crisis from his imprudent vicinity to Madame de Germeil, she waved her dislike of confiding to the discretion of Fitzpier, and determined, though not without many sensations of confusion and reluctance, to give him the answer he had solicited, and trust to him for securing the means of receiving it unobserved. Nor was she disappointed in this expectation.

The next morning, being the first in the breakfast room, as the day was warm, she threw up one of the sashes, and saw Fitzpier walking on the green before the windows, he immediately looked up. 'I am quite a *solitaire* here,' cried he, 'and if you do not intend to invite me in, do me the favor to throw me out, one of the pamphlets I have seen on the Piano Forte?'

Laure, in great perplexity, assented to the request. She thought he would expect to find her letter in the book; yet she was terrified lest he should accuse her of forwardness, in placing it there. After a minute's hesitation, the situation of de Saint Ouin, banished every scruple, and trembling with emotion, she put the letter between the leaves; but the fear of its being displaced in the fall, occurring to Fitzpier, as well as herself, he opened the door while she was deliberating what to do. She presented the pamphlet with so conscious an air, that he was assured she had comprehended his meaning.

'If on looking it over,' said he archly, 'I find I don't like it, I will return it to you in two minutes, and beg you to select another for me.'

Laure blushed.

'I believe,' added Fitzpier, kissing her hand, 'you are a good creature.'

He then ran down stairs, and left her so disturbed at the idea of his possessing the letter, that she was obliged to retire to her own chamber to compose herself, which she had fortunately time enough to do, before she was called to breakfast.

## CHAP. XII.

LAURE in her letter, had entreated de St. Ouïn not to let any consideration prevent him from setting out immediately for Paris. She re-assured him on the conduct of the Duke towards her hitherto, which had been, she said, not offensive but merely absurd; and thanking him for his cautions, begged that he would endeavour to entertain a more favorable opinion of Madame de Germeil's prudence, if not of her principles, than to suppose her capable of rashly incurring the indelible censures that would have followed her conduct, had that report been founded, which he acknowledged to be the cause of his present indiscreet journey. She concluded by affirming, that she could never be so much misled as to entail endless regret and misery upon herself, merely to promote a political intrigue; and at the same time, she could never reject any just or reasonable claims that might be made on her gratitude, for the indisputable benefits she had received at the hands of a certain individual, however unworthy he might be.

Laure waited impatiently to hear that he had complied with her wish, and left the country. She saw Fitzpier at dinner, and however difficult to accomplish it, he contrived to tell her, that de Saint Ouïn could not be prevailed upon to depart without first seeing her for a moment, and besought her with earnestness to be again at the window early the next morning. When she recollected what he had neglected, and the trouble he had been at to obtain this last look, she could not refuse it to him; but the whole intervening time was passed in the wretchedness of a conscious deviation from right, to a mind habituated to obey the rigid dictates of strict propriety.

She arose at day break and waited fearfully yet with impatience until six, and then ventured into the breakfast-room; for her own was on the other side of the house: what was her confusion and dismay to find the window shutters still closed! She made an attempt to unfasten them, and failing from not knowing the spring, returned to her chamber vexed and disappointed.

At seven she made another effort, and then found a woman servant busy in arranging the room, who observing that Laure occupied herself at the music desk, hastened her work, and soon quitted it.

With trembling steps she drew to the window; Fitzpier was already on the green, and the Marquis disguised in an English naval uniform, walking by his side: she just caught a view of them, and stepped back in an agony of terror and confusion, on observing two or three carriages and a number of servants round the door. The Marquis had half stopped under the window; but alarmed at seeing her suddenly retire, again walked on.

It was some minutes before Laure found courage to appear once more: she then saw Fitzpier alone, who directly beckened to de Saint Ouïn, and they continued to walk at a small distance from the window; but whichever way de Saint Ouïn turned, his eyes were still directed to Laure. Fitzpier seemed to be talking earnestly to him, and at length the Marquis rather impatiently broke from him.

Terrified lest he should enter the house and be discovered by Madame de Germeil, Laure waved her hand to him, and then turned away. At this instant Mademoiselle D'Ogimond entered the room, and Laure sunk upon a chair that stood near her, in the utmost consternation: Adeline alarmed at her situation, would have summoned assistance, but she exerted herself to prevent her and declared she was quite recovered.

Mademoiselle D'Ogimond's curiosity was excited equally with her sympathy, by the violent emotion in which she found Laure; who utterly unused to subterfuge and evasion, was much at a loss to account for her indisposition: Adeline's inquiries however soon subsided; but she very naturally mentioned to Madame de Germeil the terror she had been in, on finding Laure so pale and disordered, who felt too conscious to receive the scrutinizing look that followed this remark, with composure; and Madame de Germeil from that moment attended so scrupulously to every word uttered by Fitzpier, that he could not find an opportunity to recount to Laure, the bitterness of de Saint Ouin's disappointment, at the vexatious circumstance that had prevented him from exchanging a sentence with her, and his reluctant departure.

The following day he was alike unsuccessful; and unable any longer to meet her solicitous look of speaking expectation, without removing her fears, and satisfying her doubts, he determined to venture the information in writing; and catching her eye while Madame de Germeil was reading, and the other ladies equally occupied, he pushed a paper gently under the bolster of a sofa. Laure saw the manœuvre, but before she could remove it from the place, Madame de Germeil seated herself on the couch, and Adeline flying with her usual solicitude to arrange the fatal bolster for her support, discovered the note. Laure, who was making bouquets from a quantity of flowers the Duke had presented to her, trembled from head to foot, but was instantly relieved by hearing Adeline exclaim, 'Mr. Fitzpier, this billet is addressed to you.'

'Upon my soul I am very careless,' cried he taking it, 'this is my ticket of invitation to the fête at Lockyer-Place.'

He held out the paper to Madame de Germeil, and commented on the neatness of the writing, which he observed was Sir Edward's.

'Yes,' replied she carelessly, 'I remarked it when we received our tickets.'

Fitzpier soon after desired to assist Laure: 'Come, my gala ticket,' said he laughing, 'shall have the honor of binding up your flowers; but I beg you will not shew it to Lady Lockyer in that state.'

He tore off two slips of the blank part of the paper for this purpose, and folding up the rest, put it into her hand unobserved.

She found on the back of the note hastily written, with a pencil, 'I am heartily chagrined, my lovely friend, at being prevented by the uncommon attention that is paid to



every word I address to you, from executing a commission our friend left in charge with me. You will laugh at my national blunder when I tell you, that it is a circumstance equally singular and unfortunate, that the fair Aurora of yesterday did not condescend to usher in the day, until three hours after sun-rise: and many things remain at this moment unsaid, that were designed to have been uttered then, had she been less tardy. He is departed pleased and dissatisfied, murmuring but not unhappy; with an hundred assurances of loyalty and obedience, a thousand grateful thanks, and a vast number of reproaches. The fact is, you should have presented that charming face at the window, an hour and an half sooner than you did, and then our plan would not have been disconcerted. I shall be allowed perhaps to say ten words to you to-morrow. En attendant command me.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE  
PARISIAN;  
OR,  
GENUINE ANECDOTES  
OF  
DISTINGUISHED AND NOBLE  
CHARACTERS.  
*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOL. II.

*Fictis meminerit nos non joculari fabulis.*

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THE  
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CHAP. XIII.

AN event of the next day confirmed Madame de Germeil in a suspicion that totally disappointed such an expectation. Sir Edward Lockyer was in the evening a self-invited guest; and Madame de Germeil usually allowed Fitzpier to join her party, because the Duke yet seemed partial to him: he was not, however, a favourite with her, for the ceremony of soothing her vanity appeared to him so troublesome and superfluous, that he chose to omit it.

‘Pray, Mr. Fitzpier,’ said Sir Edward, continuing an oration which had never ceased from the moment of his entrance, ‘may I ask—may I inquire, who is the handsome foreigner who was talking with you so earnestly yesterday—no, I mean on Tuesday, on the road to . . . I protest I forget what road; but I believe it was the road to . . .’

‘Sir,’ said Fitzpier, interrupting him, ‘he is from Ireland; you do not, I hope, call him a foreigner?’ ‘Oh, dear, no!’ returned Sir Edward, in a shrieking voice, ‘surely not, by no means—certainly not: but the gentleman I speak of was a ——’ ‘Oh, yes,’ interrupted Fitzpier, rather impetuously, ‘you mean Baron ——’

‘I thought so,’ continued the indefatigable babbler, ‘I thought the gentleman was from France. I was just going to say he was a French gentleman; though I discovered it more by his manner than his person, which is—’

‘It is Baron Wayermann, a German,’ cried the other, endeavouring, in vain, to restrain his impatience.

‘——Which is, in my opinion, very handsome. Excuse me ladies, I admire the fair ladies of your country; there is so much charming vivacity, so much good-humoured freedom, such a pretty— But I was observing that I think this French gentleman very handsome, and a very fine figure of a man.’

‘By G——!’ said Fitzpier, losing all patience, ‘if you were to place a stick perpendicularly, to touch his knee and foot, you would find that his leg makes as complete a semi-circle as ever Sir Isaac Newton drew.’

‘—A very fine figure indeed! and a handsome face to crown it withal; fine intelligent eyes, and fine turned features.’

‘His mouth is turned into his ear by a stroke of the palsy,’ cried Fitzpier, in a rage.

Laure had listened to Sir Edward's interrupted harangue in a consternation she could scarcely conceal, and Madame de Germeil seemed to think it very mysterious; but Adeline, Madame L'Arminiere, and the Duke, feeling neither doubt nor embarrassment, enjoyed the scene without restraint, and made no effort to control their mirth.

'Bless me then, surely,' continued the eternal Sir Edward, 'we don't mean the same person: I think it cannot be the same person. The gentleman I saw is tall, and well proportioned; a fine figure, a very fine figure! with a clear complexion, and dark eyes; but his mouth is quite strait, and when he speaks—'

'He speaks to the purpose,' interrupted the irritated Irishman, 'and never outruns his own breath, or the patience of his hearers.'

Sir Edward had just penetration enough to discover that Fitzpier had lost his temper, an accident that never happening to himself, he was not quick at observing in others; he endeavoured to sooth him with a variety of excuses, insensibly ending in an involuntary self-congratulation, on his own happy mode of adjusting debates, and reconciling differences; recording with an inexhaustible memory, numberless instances to prove it, from the occurrences of Lockyer-Place.

Fitzpier recovered his usual good humour, when he thought the danger of a discovery was past; but Madame de Germeil continued to cherish suspicions, which, though she could not reconcile to probability, urged her to attend still more closely to the conduct of Fitzpier.

Madame de Germeil had not an intention, when she entered Harrowgate, of remaining there more than two or three days; but hearing from Mrs. Grenby the report that she was residing in one of the Duke of Harmington's houses, she determined to lengthen her stay at a place so much frequented, the more forcibly to discredit the calumny.

Mrs. Grenby informed her she had traced it, with the assistance of her brother, to Lady Carbreon. Mr. Cosbyne, she said, was so much incensed at the malicious tale, that he had openly reproached her with being the authoress of it. Lady Carbreon supported the charge with admirable composure, and denied that the report originated with her. Mrs. Grenby added, that it was said, she had offered Lord William Dalvening all the consolation in her power, for the mortification he had endured from the rejection of Laure, which he had philosophically accepted, when the first transports of his disappointment had abated.

Madame L'Arminiere, whose only plan was amusement, had readily assented to remain with Madame de Germeil, at Harrowgate; and now, with equal pliability, agreed to stay there, until summoned, by their engagement to Lockyer-Place, to which they had all been invited with infinite eagerness and importunity.

Lady Lockyer remained at Harrowgate until the morning of a day on which she expected, by appointment, a large dinner party at home, and was not able to resist an offered rubber at piquet, while the horses were putting to. She sat down, utterly disregarding the remonstrances of Sir Edward, who was too experimentally certain how the affair would end.

Fitzpier happening to be present, was seized with an inclination to retaliate the uneasiness he had suffered from Sir Edward a few days before; and drew him out of the room, by desiring he would give his opinion of a brace of pointers he offered to conduct him to. The baronet jumped instantly into the trap, and Fitzpier led him to a private stable, when he descanted so long, and with so much energy, on the beauty of the dogs, that before the smallest probability appeared of his making a finale, the rubber was out, and Lady Lockyer looking at her watch, found that scarcely an hour and half remained to travel twenty miles in. The case was urgent—Sir Edward was sought for with the most diligent assiduity. Five—ten minutes elapsed, and every minute seemed an age.

At length, finding that her utmost efforts would not enable her to appear at her own house in tolerable time, unless she sat out instantly, she very gravely left word that Sir Edward was to be sent after her, and the postillions drove on.

When they had galloped four or five miles, the projected departure, with all the inconveniencies of a delay, rushing suddenly into the imagination of Sir Edward, he started in great emotion: his tongue, which had rung a perpetual larum from the moment he had awoke in the morning, stopt as by enchantment; and darting through the stable door, he flew along the road like an old hunter, whose ears are suddenly regaled with a full cry. When he came near the Hotel, and could not discern any signs of the equipage, he immediately comprehended his disaster; and stood revolving in his mind, whether he should endeavour to overtake Lady Lockyer on horseback, or in a hack post-chaise: he would have much preferred the former, but for the unlucky circumstance of never having crossed the back of a horse during the last sixty years of his life.

In the height of his perplexity Fitzpier arrived, who had been put to his utmost speed in following him; and perceiving him in the middle of the road, trembling with anxious impatience, panting—his eyes staring wildly, and his head veering this way and that, as if it were turning on a pivot, exclaimed with a loud laugh, ‘A fine figure! a very fine figure! and a fine intelligent face to crown it withal!’

Sir Edward had just recollection enough left to order a chaise, which the ostler assured him was standing ready in the yard; but at the same time swore, if he were to be kicked from Durham to Dover, he could not find, in the whole place, a horse to draw it. Sir Edward was confounded at this intelligence: and whatever opinion he entertained of the excellence of his cook, every dish of the ill-fated dinner, mangled and disfigured, glided successively before his eyes, like the injured ghosts to the imagination of Richard the Third.

His concern was so much increased by the reflection, that Fitzpier could no longer withstand his distress, and instantly offered his horses and servant to attend him all the way, if he could not get up with the carriage. The proposal was accepted in a transport of thankfulness; and the eagerness of his anxiety to get home, overcoming every difficulty, Sir Edward ventured to seat himself in the saddle.

Of Fitzpier's horses, one was hot and fiery, and the other remarkably quiet; a circumstance that would have given him a capital opportunity of completing the jest in style, by putting Sir Edward in a situation to break his neck: but though he was a young fellow of wit and spirit on most occasions, such a coup de maître never entered his imagination; on the contrary, he was so well satisfied with the little revenge he had already taken, that he really felt interested that Sir Edward should perform the journey in safety.

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#### CHAP. XIV.

ADELINÉ knew that Madame de Germeil had very lately received letters from her father, and to her infinite surprise and chagrin, she was profoundly silent on the subject. Hitherto the Comte had always written either to Mademoiselle D'Ogimond or Laure, when he sent a paquet to England; but in the last they did not appear to be noticed. Reason whispered to Adeline that such a total neglect was strange, but Madame de Germeil's will, more powerful with her than reason, forbade her to complain.

Laure, whose fears and suspicions, excited by the accusations of the Marquis, were almost confirmed by the testimony of concurring circumstances, viewed the conduct of Madame de Germeil with the averted eye of disappointed confidence and repelled esteem, and doubted whether she had not withheld a letter the Comte had meant for her. As she hourly felt an increasing aversion from receiving benefits at the hands of a man whose conduct was repugnant to every principle of rectitude and humanity, after many efforts to overcome her timidity, she had written to him the day of De Saint Ouin's departure, to demand the information she felt every hour more impatient to hear; and concluded by conjuring him, with earnestness, no longer to tax his generosity by continuing her in a situation to which she was sensible she had no claim, either by birth or fortune, but suffer her to return to the humble station from which he had apparently taken her; and averred, with many protestations, that so far from being mortified at such a transition, she should be relieved from the humiliating consciousness, that she was not entitled according to the general opinion of the world, to mix with that part of it which had pretensions to the honor of living in the society of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond.

Laure had given this letter, sealed, to Madame de Germeil, to inclose with her paquet; and as she had often written to the Comte on less interesting occasions, she hoped this letter would be the less remarked by her. From this period Madame de Germeil had treated her with the most chilling indifference, and sometimes with pointed neglect: Laure endured it with philosophy, for she no longer loved her; and could now perceive faults in her, which esteem and gratitude had formerly veiled from her penetration; her conduct added to these, a conviction that Madame could be unjust, and dislike without a cause.

The letter she suspected the Comte to have written her, she supposed not to be of much import, because he could not at the time have received hers; she therefore waited the event of her inquiries in silent suspense, certain that it could not be decided until the Comte's messenger, who was dispatched every fortnight to England, returned again.

Laure sometimes imagined that Madame de Germeil's displeasure arose from the failure of her efforts in making the Duke explain the motive of his attentions: a surmise equally founded on a cessation of her excessive complaisance to him, and a disposition she evinced to rally him on subjects she well knew he was vastly unwilling to have discussed. Laure perceived the restraint that now accompanied the officious solicitude he still continued to exhibit for her, and entertained hopes of being soon entirely exempted from it.

In fact, Madame de Germeil and the Duke had been playing a separate game: he imagined the Comte D'Ogimond's resources must soon fail; and when he first saw Laure, he hoped to procure her upon his own terms, by assisting him to prosecute his ill-digested plans of villany. Madame de Germeil, on the contrary, foreseeing the storm ready to burst on the Comte's head, was eager to obtain for him a support and ally in a country she thought he must necessarily fly to on an emergency. They were both disappointed. The Duke was too crafty to give into her scheme, and soon discerned in Laure a mind too elevated to be induced by any accident or mischance to comply with his.

Madame de Germeil, as a last resort, mentioned to him, with an affectation of distress, the intimation she had received from Mrs. Grenby. The Duke catching eagerly at an opportunity of extricating himself with decency from a situation which began to be extremely irksome to him, lamented very pathetically that he should be the unfortunate, though innocent agent to such a piece of illiberal scandal; and declared that he would render it abortive, by absenting himself from their fascinating society: and in undergoing so cruel a mortification, he should be almost recompensed, by reflecting that it was a sacrifice voluntarily offered by the most respectful attachment, in return for the envied distinction which had called it forth.

Much as Madame de Germeil had disliked his reserve, she was unprepared for such heroic sentiments; and if she acquiesced in them, it was, at least, for five minutes in silence. The Duke profiting by this unexpected effect of her astonishment, retired with a gravity becoming the occasion, sincerely thanking fortune that he had escaped so well. The last seven days had gradually prepared Madame de Germeil for this disappointment; yet she could not endure to be thus baffled in a plan she had originally thought herself sure of succeeding in. Her ill humour and resentment were not to be concealed by any ordinary effort; and her patience, irritated by several recent events, could not enable her to pass this over with her accustomed discretion.

The Duke judged it would be prudent to withdraw as much as possible from the verge of her phillippics; and entered immediately on his sagacious resolution of self-denial, by dining that day with a family, neither very young nor very handsome, consisting of three discreet damsels, and an invalid dowager, their mother, whose society not offering a very alluring prospect, he had hitherto repeatedly neglected their advances. The next morning he found himself under the necessity of paying a long promised visit to a gentleman in the North-Riding; and as the expedition would certainly require two or three days to perform, he told the young ladies he feared he should not have the pleasure of seeing them again until they met at Sir Edward Lockyer's. The young ladies received the intimation with a very decent appearance of regret; but they were not by any means inconsolable in his absence. The intervening time passed quietly on without any incident to disturb them.

Madame de Germeil was not indeed kind to Laure, yet she was now no longer reproved for inattention to the merits of the Duke, which she had often fatigued herself to no purpose to discover.



## CHAP. XV.

AT length they bade adieu to Harrowgate; for Madame de Germeil meant to proceed immediately to London on quitting Lockyer-Place. They were almost the first who arrived there on the Jubilee day, and were received by Sir Edward with all the unfeigned pleasure of genuine hospitality, and he acknowledged with gratitude the honor their presence conferred on him. Such a compliment from the lady of the house would not have appeared superfluous to a person of Mademoiselle's D'Ogimond's rank; but as she depended entirely on her sposo for the ceremonial of receiving her guests, she did not descend amongst them until the dinner was announced.

The company was very numerous, and consisted of a strange, but entertaining, medley. Sir Edward repeated to every young lady individually, that he expected part of the band from York; and hoped, with a most joyous smirk, that they would not have any *serious* objection to a ball in the evening.

Fitzpier advanced to Laure, and secured her promise for two dances before Madame de Germeil could find time to forbid her compliance, had she been disposed to do it.

At seven the music was expected, and a quarter after, Sir Edward began to be very much disconcerted that it did not appear: when the clock struck eight he was half distracted, and ran, with his watch in his hand, from the Terrace to the Drawing-room, from the Drawing-room to the Offices, and from the Offices to the Terrace, alternately. The setting sun gilded the road they were to pass, but no rattling post-chaise struck his eye or saluted his ear. It was as impossible to forbear smiling at his perplexity as it was to pity his mortification. He affirmed with an earnestness of asseveration, that would almost have enforced belief of a Jew, that he had himself engaged the band, and consequently their absence was not occasioned by mistake or negligence on his part.

The last sun-beam dropped beneath the horizon, and carried with it all the hope Sir Edward had still entertained of seeing his tardy Orions. He then returned to the drawing-room in great despondency, having charged some of the servants to keep a look out, and give him instant notice if their approach should be discovered.

Those who had declined dancing retired with great composure to the card-room, exulting perhaps internally, that the younger and more attractive should be deprived of an amusement they were no longer themselves capable of relishing.

The calm however, was soon disturbed by the entrance of a servant, who whispered to the expecting Sir Edward, with many marks of fear and horror, that while John and Joe were listening in the Park for the sound of wheels, they had seen a figure, all in white, carrying a white coffin round the clump of elms.

This intelligence was overheard by a lady, whose husband, an officer, was supposed to have been lost in the Bay of Bengal. She had supported this mournful conjecture of his fate about two months; and withstood with great firmness the intreaties of a young man who solicited to succeed him in her heart; but her scruples had not allowed her to listen to the one, until the death of the other was better ascertained. On hearing the servant's report, a whim instantly seized her that the ghost of the dear deceased had indulgently taken this method of convincing her of the reality of his death, that she might comply with her own wishes and those of her lover, and was at that moment about to appear before her. The idea was not entirely an unwelcome one; yet the terror that naturally accompanied it, and perhaps a spark of affection revived by this delicate proof of posthumous attention to her happiness, made her shriek violently for a minute, and then, with the usual gradations, fall into strong convulsions.

Every body was astonished, and the exclamation observed on these occasions, flew round the room very fast; but no answer could be returned to the universal cry of 'What is it? What is the matter?' for Sir Edward had slipped away to learn more of the story.

Lady Lockyer repeatedly rung for assistance, and no one appeared to receive her commands: surprised at this unusual neglect she withdrew to discover the cause of it. Every place was empty; she called several times; no answer was returned: she then took a light, and went up stairs; every thing there was equally solitary. She returned to her company in some consternation, at the instant the affrighted widow recovered sufficiently to declare the reason of her terrors, and to ask if her late husband had not entered the room, carrying a white coffin. This question struck a panic into some of her audience, whilst the rest supposed her intellects were suddenly deranged. Every body now looked round for Sir Edward, who had not yet re-appeared, and were seized with fresh wonder at the tale Lady Lockyer related.

Some of the gentlemen rushed out to learn what had happened: of these was Fitzpier, whose curiosity and expectation of amusement from the dénouement were raised to the highest pitch. They ran into the Park; the moon shone very bright, and they soon discovered Sir Edward at the head of a troop of servants, male and female; for not only the domestics of the family, but of every guest, had run out to see the ghost; most of them induced by curiosity, and the rest because they were afraid of being left behind.

The whole party seemed to be dancing the Heyes, for nobody would have stood on the outside if they could have prevailed upon another to do it. Fitzpier, who was the first that joined them, demanded of Sir Edward, how much of the enemy's motions he had discovered since he had occupied that post?

'Bless me!' returned the Baronet, who was strongly tinctured with superstition, 'this is the strangest thing!—I certainly saw the figure and the coffin, as plainly as I see you. Surely it can't be a thief! What should he be lugging about a coffin for?'

'There it is! there it is!' they all cried.

Fitzpier advanced towards the ghost, and hailed it. 'God bless you!' returned the spirit, 'do tell me where I am. I am fainting with thirst and fatigue. The devil fetch me if I have not been wandering nine or ten miles, with my d—d instrument, case and all, upon my shoulders!'

Notwithstanding the tone of distress with which this was uttered, Fitzpier could not restrain an immoderate fit of laughter, which being heard by Sir Edward and his followers, who had still kept aloof, they all ran to the place, and discovered in the object of their terror, an unhappy individual of the expected York band, stripped of his coat and waistcoat, which hung on his arm, and the white coffin a viol de Gamba, in a deal case.

Sir Edward first questioned him, with great eagerness, on the cause of his disappointment, and then inquired how he came there, and where his companions were? The man disburthening his shoulders of the white coffin, replied very humbly, that he would relate their mischance; but begged first to have something to drink, and to be permitted to sit down.

When his request was complied with, he told Sir Edward that he had set out with his companions at three o'clock, in two post-chaises; but at the last stage, the only post-boy who knew the way to Lockyer-Place was in liquor; and when they got on the moor, on the other side of the Park, he turned out of the road, on pretence of taking a short cut, and drove into a large bog; and the other chaise following the first very rapidly, stuck fast before they discovered the mistake. They all contrived, he said, to scramble over in safety; but found it impossible to extricate the first chaise and horses, and in trying to free the other, the harness and traces were broken, so as to render them useless. The post-boys and his companions returned to the last post-town they came through, which was not more than a mile and a half from the scene of their disaster; and as his instrument was so heavy and troublesome to carry, and he did not chuse to leave it behind him, he agreed to be the person left on the moor to watch the chaises, till they returned in others. After waiting two hours, and not seeing any thing of them, he took his viol on his back, and marched the same way they had appeared to take. He soon lost himself; and rambling about until he was heartily tired, he entered the Park, and keeping the strait road, instead of turning off to the house, he found himself going out at another gate. Puzzled and bewildered, the twilight just coming on, he had measured back his steps, and again lost his path. He added, that he discovered Sir Edward and the servants, but the moon at that instant getting behind a cloud, he had mistaken them for a herd of deer.

At this observation Fitzpier's laugh returned with redoubled violence, in which he was joined by the whole company, who had assembled to hear the story, the widow excepted, who found herself so much indisposed and chagrined, at having exposed herself so unmercifully, and at the uncertainty in which she was again plunged, that she ordered her carriage, and went immediately home. In passing the clump of elms she could not forbear throwing a sidelong glance of inquiry; but not a speck of white appeared to confirm her yet existing expectation.

The wandering son of Apollo had scarcely finished his narrative, when his companions arrived in much better condition than himself. They directly attacked him for quitting his post on the moor, where they had been two hours hallooing and searching for him. He asked, in his turn, why they made him stay such a confounded time, broiling in the sun, and parched with thirst, while they were, most likely, amusing themselves over a bottle.

At this hint, which was in part well founded, and closely followed up by a torrent of reproaches from the knight of the white coffin, every man began his separate defence, with such eagerness and vociferation, that the bystanders were deafened with the clamour. In short, they never made a more hideous noise even in tuning their instruments in a concert-room for the edification of the audience.

At length Sir Edward obtained silence, by desiring them to refresh themselves, and repair immediately to the ball-room, where the delay their disaster occasioned was forgotten in the laugh it excited. Sir Edward rubbed his hands; and to every gratulation on the conclusion of his troubles, crowed out with infinite satisfaction, 'Ay, ay, better late than never; better late than never.'

Fitzpier did not fail to claim Laure's promised hand; and took an opportunity to inform her that he had received a letter from De Saint Ouin, dated from Dover, written while he waited for the vessel that was to convey him to Calais. 'He meant to have left Valain in England,' continued Fitzpier, 'but I persuaded him I should be as faithful, and probably more useful to him. As I am an idle fellow, I intend to employ the rest of the week in sauntering up to London; perhaps I shall be there almost as soon as you; and if Madame will not allow me the honour of seeing you in Park-Lane, I may be fortunate enough to meet you sometimes elsewhere.'

Laure, who felt an increasing regard for Fitzpier, was not displeased at the intimation. She listened to his account of De Saint Ouin with silent attention, but resolutely denied herself the satisfaction of speaking of him. Fitzpier observed this circumstance, and instantly dropped the subject.

The Duke of Harmington entered very late in the evening: he paid his compliments to Madame de Germeil and the young ladies with unusual zeal and respect: but though importuned by Sir Edward to sleep at Lockyer-Place, he chose to slip away at one o'clock, and before he was missed by half the party, had travelled twenty miles.

Laure rejoiced internally at being delivered from his gallantry; yet had she been allowed the privilege of extracting amusement from it, she would have found it more laughable than vexatious; but while Madame de Germeil continued his champion, she had been obliged to listen to him with affected complacency, and repress the mirth his absurdities would have extorted from a stoic.

## CHAP. XVI.

THE next morning the four ladies sat out for London, where they arrived in safety the third day. Mrs. Grenby happened to be still at Wincale, and flew to them immediately. In a tête à tête with her friend, the subject of the Duke's attentions was discussed, and Madame de Germeil suppressing her own plan and discomfiture, gave such a detail of them, that Mrs. Grenby, for a fortnight after, could never preserve her gravity when she reflected on it.

The town was very empty; but Madame de Germeil chose to remain there, as she expected hourly a summons from the Comte to return to Paris, where her talents, and the beauty of Laure, were much wanted, to counterbalance the effects of the proceedings against him, planned by the old Marquis de Saint Ouïn, with so much prudence, and executed with so much vigour, that little doubt now remained on the public mind of the innocence of his son in that fatal affair, which stamp'd the family of Saint Ouïn enemies of the Comte D'Ogimond for ever.

It was proved by them, that this fell villain, who was indeed ever ready primed with mischief, which his erring head and coward hand sometimes failed to perform, had proposed to the young Marquis to murder Lamalaige; and finding the instigation rejected with the highest indignation and horror, and the young man's friendship and esteem forfeited for ever, urged equally by fear and revenge, had procured a wretch to commit the atrocious act, and then accuse and arrest De Saint Ouïn, as the murderer; who would not have had time given him to explain the matter, because being a Noble, and the unhappy Lamalaige of the tiers etat, the populace would not have permitted him to be conducted alive to prison; and if unexpectedly they should have been inclined to spare him, the Comte's agent was directed to make a scuffle, and dispatch the young Marquis on pretence of his having attempted to escape.

This diabolical scheme was, however, in part disconcerted. When Valain gave his master the letter, in which the Comte explained himself, he remained for some purpose in the room; but his attention was soon diverted from his occupation, to the emotion that agitated the Marquis whilst he read it, who sat for some time motionless: at length, starting up in an ecstasy of rage, he tore the paper, and throwing it from him with violence, darted out of the room. He returned however in two minutes, but it was no longer where he had left it: he questioned Valain, who answered in great confusion, that as Monsieur le Marquis had torn the letter and thrown it away, he had had the misfortune to think it of no further use, and as it littered the place, he had put the pieces in the fire. The Marquis, too much agitated to attend to the improbability of his excuse, and imagining his embarrassment arose from having destroyed the paper, mal-apropos, told him he had done well.

Valain was a great favourite with De Saint Ouïn; he had served him from a boy with the utmost zeal and fidelity: he knew the letter was from the Comte, whom he had always detested, and was afraid the young Marquis would be entrapped into some

mischief; for he had been told of an *illustrious young man*, who had been insidiously allured to ruin by the pernicious influence of the Comte's society and example.

Valain's attachment to his master coinciding with his curiosity, had induced him to snatch up the letter, which he meant to read, and replace where he found it; but the sudden return of the Marquis prevented him: yet he had already seen enough to confirm his suspicions of the Comte, and hastily put the detestable scrawl in his pocket.

The more Valain considered the subject of the letter, and the disappointment of those hopes the Comte had formed, the more his apprehensions increased for the safety of his master, which he thought would be highly endangered by remaining where he was, and he often ventured to remind him that he generally at that season of the year was accustomed to visit his father. De Saint Ouïn was much more inclined to visit England and Laure; for when he thought of the opinion she would entertain of him from the representations of the Comte, he was more than half distracted. In one of his paroxysms he determined to indulge his inclination; and his impatience not admitting the delay of a minute, he directed Valain to execute a few commissions, and follow him post to Ostend. He then sat out, though it was almost dark, attended by one servant.

Valain was preparing to depart the next morning, when he was prevented by the arrival of an enraged mob, who beset the house, and demanded the Marquis with loud shouts. Some of the people soon rushed in, accompanied by a guard, who inquired for his master. Valain coolly replied, that he did not exactly know his route, but he believed he was gone to Brittany. They would not credit the assertion; and after having searched every place in vain, returned to the spot where he was left, with some of the party to guard him, and broke open a box, in which Valain had just packed some cloaths belonging to De Saint Ouïn: they found in it two letters addressed to him, not yet unsealed, which had arrived only an hour before: one of them, which was read aloud, reproached him vehemently for conceiving a design so base, as that he had manifested towards Lamalaige; and contained many supplications not to engage in an act so barbarous and dishonourable. The signature Valain was unacquainted with, but he easily discovered the disguised writing of the Comte.

In the interim the other letter had been seized by a man who was remarkably officious in searching for the Marquis: it was taken from his reluctant hand, and appeared to be dated five days before the other, and signed by the Count D'Ogimond. He reproached De Saint Ouïn with pusillanimity and want of friendship, in refusing to perform what he had requested of him; and alluding to the letter Valain at that instant happened to have in his pocket, 'Remember,' he said, 'that if you are a man of honour, the letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> is destroyed.'

Whilst the paper was reading, the fellow who had first taken possession of it, called vehemently to the guard to continue the search, observing that it was almost impossible the Marquis could be out of the town; or if he were, it would be proper to inquire which of the gates he had passed through, that he might be traced; alledging that his flight was every proof of guilt that could be required.

Valain having learnt the purport of the accusation, strenuously asserted his master's innocence, though at the hazard of his own life; and taking from his pocket the letter he had so fortunately preserved, gave it to the officer who commanded the guard, and desired him to compare it with the others, and he would find they were all written by the same person: it would illustrate too, the request which the Marquis was reproached for refusing to comply with.

Valain demanded when the murder was committed? and was answered, that Lamalaige had been seen walking on the Esplanade at five in the morning; and it was supposed the atrocious deed had been done soon after. He then triumphantly desired they would take the trouble of inquiring at the gates, and they would find that his master had quitted the town the preceding evening.

The same fellow who had been so active in the accusation and search, remarked with a malicious sneer, that the affair might have been performed by deputy. However as the mob could not be immediately gratified, by tearing the supposed offender to pieces, some of them admitted that he might possibly be innocent; and in a short time they dispersed very quietly, leaving the guard to continue their search and execute their office, without favouring them with any further assistance.

Valain remained unmolested until evening; and then began his journey, first making a circuit to mislead any one who might be inclined to follow him. He arrived at Ostend in safety, and was directed to proceed to Dover, where he would find the Marquis, who had thus flown from the danger he was not aware of. And that very ardour of attachment which the Comte meant to disappoint, even while he unfeelingly encouraged it to assist his views, occasioned them to be baffled thus fatally for his peace and reputation.

## CHAP. XVII.

MRS. GRENBY prevailed with Madame de Germeil and the young ladies to pass a few days at Wincale; and it was announced to be a farewell visit. Mr. Cosbyne was not there: his sister told her guests that he was making the tour of France and Italy, both for amusement and the recovery of his health, which had been a little impaired.

And here they learnt that Lady Carbreon, accompanying a party on the water, without any prudent addition to her usual habiliments, had caught a violent cold, and lost the use of those limbs she had been so forward to exhibit.

Madame de Germeil received the mandate she was expecting immediately on her return to London. Calling to take leave of one of the few families they had any knowledge of, who yet remained in Town, they met Fitzpier, who was surprised at the news of their sudden departure. His adieus to Madame de Germeil were rather cold; but as he conducted Laure to the carriage, he told her that he felt a strange regret at being obliged so quickly to relinquish the sight of her; yet if the result of her leaving England were to be advantageous to the Marquis, he would try to overcome it.

She bade him farewell with a sweetness of concern that made the task still more difficult; and when the coach drove from the door, after following it sometime with his eye, he walked home without his hat.

Madame de Germeil sighed that she was obliged thus to quit England with the design that had brought her thither still unaccomplished. She had hoped either from the rank and reputed fortune of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, or the powerful charms of the admired Laure, to have procured an alliance in this country, that would have proved essentially useful to the Comte.

She had sacrificed Lord William Dalvening to the fancied attachment of the Duke of Harmington, whom she wished to encourage in preference to almost any other candidate: and at the moment she discovered her mistake with respect to his designs, she was obliged to relinquish the pursuit, and repair by her personal efforts, the alarming effects of the perverse obstinacy with which the Comte neglected her counsel, to follow the dictates of his own wilful imbecility.

Adeline conceived only pleasure at the idea of returning to her father, while Laure was overwhelmed with perplexity and confusion, when she thought of her approaching meeting with the Comte, who had not deigned to take the least notice of her appeal to him, and for whom she felt her horror and disgust hourly increase.

Madame de Germeil travelled in silence, apparently in the deepest contemplation. When they arrived at —, about forty miles north of Paris, in returning to the carriage after taking some refreshment, she was stopt by a party of National Guards, who affirmed that Mademoiselle D'Ogimond and herself were prisoners.



‘Impossible!’ exclaimed Madame de Germeil with trembling astonishment, ‘by what authority?’ ‘That of the National Convention,’ they replied. She seemed thunder-struck; but instantly recovering herself, desired to see the principal magistrate of the place. This request was with some reluctance complied with.

Adeline was carried thither in a state of insensibility, and Laure followed in silent agony.

They were escorted to the house of the Magistrate, who was likewise a Priest; and Madame de Germeil leaving Adeline to the care of Laure and the attendants, repaired to the presence of the great man, who looking at her with an air of authority as she entered, did not condescend to rise from his seat, but evinced his knowledge of the laws of good breeding only by a gentle inclination of the head.

His gouvernante, though a very important personage in his family, had not yet assumed any of the concomitants of sudden elevation; and was vastly civil to the young ladies, whose situation she thought requiring attention and commiseration, she offered them hers, with a hearty good will; but the beauty and condescension of Laure soon gained her the pre-eminence in Madelon’s favour, and she addressed to her most of her consolatory compliments.

Madame de Germeil’s own femme de chambre and Laure’s maid, who were following in another carriage, arrived at —— during Madame’s conference with the Abbé. They instantly learnt what had happened, and were conducted, at their own request, to their ladies.

The moment Madame de Germeil’s woman appeared before Madelon, she first examined her very attentively, and then springing upon her with wonderful agility, screamed out, ‘Give me my child! Where is my child? You shan’t move a step till you have given up my beautiful child. It did not belong to you—I’ll take you to Monsieur L’Abbé, and you shall be made to confess where you have put my sweet child—I thought such a powerful sweet baby didn’t belong to you. Madame de Brience came for her a year after you had her, and if it hadn’t been for you, I should have had my fortune made, and all for the sake of my beautiful nursling!’

The femme de chambre had not power to answer these furious interrogations: she was too respectable a woman in the opinion of every one present to incur the suspicion of being a kidnapper of children, and her agitation might have been the effect of surprise as well as any other emotion. However the uproar made by Madelon drew the Abbé himself and all his auditors to the spot, where her tongue, which did not appear to the by-standers either stiff or paralytic, soon informed them of what the culprit was accused.

The Abbé commanded silence; but Madelon was never so much inclined to disobey him, and continued her accusation with unwearied perseverance and obstinacy.

‘She came to me one day in the spring,’ said the gouvernante, ‘fifteen years ago: I remember her ugly face well enough; and said she was sent by the father of the child to fetch it away. I should never have believed her to be sure, only she brought with her a powerful heap of crowns, and then I thought it must be true; but no such thing. Here truly a year after came to my cottage Madame Duchess de Brience — No — I mean Madame Brience, for she is no Duchess now, and said the sweet child was her grand-daughter; and then I was ready to kill myself that I had let this old ape have it;—for to be sure Madame Brience offered me any money to let her know where the nursling was—and I can send to her now—so do you be pleased to tell Monsieur L’Abbé where my child is.’

‘Peace, Madelon,’ cried the Abbé. ‘—Who is this woman? What child does she talk of?’

‘My child, my nursling!’ screamed Madelon, ‘who was never christened that I heard of, and so I called her Louise.’

‘And who were her parents?’ demanded he.

‘That I don’t know,’ said the gouvernante. ‘My mother used at that time to carry cream and butter to Paris every morning; and a number of great houses she went to; for they all said her butter was very good. God bless her. I used to help make it before I married Louis Duhamel—and when I came to have a child, my mother asked wherever she went, if any of the grand people wanted a wet-nurse: they all said no, but I suppose some of them did, for a little while after, I had this child brought to me, and money enough to keep it, bless its little heart! for a power of time.’

‘Why then,’ interrupted the Abbé, ‘if you are not certain to whom it belonged, perhaps this woman may have had a right to claim it.’

‘No, Sir, if you please, not!’ exclaimed Madelon, ‘it was grand-daughter to Madame de Brience.’

‘Sir,’ said Madame de Germeil impatiently, ‘will you be pleased to defer hearing this person’s detail, until you have listened to what I was about to have the honour of saying to you before we were interrupted?’

‘Monsieur L’Abbé shan’t go,’ cried the gouvernante, ‘till he has made this ugly wolf confess what she has done with Louise.’

Unhappily the countenance thus apostrophized had some resemblance to the animal mentioned; and this epithet added to the preceding ones, entirely upset the patience of the femme de chambre. Such a storm of rage ensued, that the voices of the two women sounded more like a peal of discordant bells, jingled by unskilful ringers, than the delightful organ of harmony and reason, belonging to a pair of the softer sex.

The lady of the bed-chamber in the course of her vindication, asserted that she had taken the child from nurse by the order of the father, as she had told the woman at the time, and she could prove it to any body.

‘What absurdity!’ exclaimed Madame de Germeil; ‘will it not be soon enough to vindicate yourself when you are accused by those who have a right to arraign your conduct?’

‘Pardon me, Madame,’ replied the femme de chambre, ‘but I cannot bear to be so called by such an one as she, for all the rights in the world. I am no more an ugly wolf than she is: and you, Madame, know very well, I did not steal the child as she says.’

‘Take down that woman’s deposition,’ said the Abbé, in a magisterial tone, to a man who acted as his secretary, or clerk.

‘And do you really, Monsieur L’Abbé, treat this affair seriously?’ cried Madame de Germeil. ‘At least I hope you will first have the goodness—’

‘Madame,’ interrupted he, ‘I shall do myself the honour of treating you with all the civility in my power, until I find it convenient to have you conveyed to Paris. Meantime I must inform you, that the National Convention, when it appointed me an humble administrator of justice, supposed me incapable of employing my time and attention on frivolous objects.’

Madame de Germeil finding the man at once proud and imbecile, instead of reasoning, soothed him with all the persuasion she was mistress of; but could only obtain the favour of being heard immediately after the examination of Mademoiselle Bridonette, her woman; who was ushered into the chamber her lady had just quitted, and Madelon followed without much entreaty.

## CHAP. XVIII.

MADAME DE GERMEIL remained with the young ladies in a state of perturbation and anxiety that would have excited interest in a mind far more unfeeling than that of Laure; who forgetting all the coldness and dislike with which she had lately been treated, shared her grief, and consoled her with inimitable delicacy and tenderness.

Madame de Germeil was not insensible to her attentions; but much as she was accustomed to repress every emotion, she gave way at this instant, to her anguish, and wept.

A sight so unusual, drew the trembling Adeline to her side, who hanging over her in an agony, sobbed with violence: yet she knew but half her misfortune; for Madame de Germeil had learnt from the Abbé, that the Comte D'Ogimond was then in confinement, without a hope of being again liberated.

She soon however recovered from a softness so uncommon to her, and was endeavouring to gain composure, when Madelon's voice from the next room, saluted her ear, with that kind of tone that *will* be heard. 'Jesu Maria!' said she, 'why then she is my sweet child, my little Louise!' and darting into the room with violence, she ran to Laure, and surveying her eagerly, from head to foot, embraced her with an extravagance of joy that knew no bounds.

Her imagination converting, in an instant, the beautiful girl again into the pretty nursling, she called out in a manner something between singing and screaming, 'You shall go directly to Madame Brience—I will take you myself to Madame Brience, your grand-mamma.'

'The woman doats,' said Madame de Germeil, 'how can she be so related to Madame Brience, whose only offspring is the Countess D'Ogimond!'

'But she was not always her only child,' observed the Abbé, who had again emerged from his audience-room.

'I should rather suppose, Sir,' answered she with great deference, 'that this young lady was born after the event that made her so.'

'However that may be,' cried the Abbé, in a tone of decision, 'I shall take charge of this young person until I receive instructions from the Convention in what manner to dispose of her.'

Laure had attended to this scene from the entrance of Madelon in a violent conflict of emotions, that took from her the power of utterance and motion, yet left her sense enough to hear the discussion. At the close of the Abbé's speech she sunk back in her chair, in an agony not to be described. To be left in the power of a man she knew

nothing of—to be torn from her beloved Adeline, now that she was in distress—and to be at the disposal of a set of people, who might not allow her to claim the protection of her natural friends, when she might indulge a hope of being acknowledged by them, were circumstances that filled her mind with terror and despondency. Adeline almost equally moved, threw herself at the feet of the Priest, and entreated that Laure might not be taken from her: while Madame de Germeil, discovering that she had to deal with a man who possessed some power but no feeling, received his fiat in silence, and declined any further conference with him.

She was then, with Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, escorted back to the inn, from whence they were to be conducted to Paris. Laure was prevented from following them, not without some violence, and Madelon then set about consoling her with all her might.

'Diantre,' cried she; 'my sweet Miss Louise, if I was in your place, I would not care for that proud woman full of great words, nor t'other cup of milk and water that's with her: why Madame Brience will take care of you, she will be glad to do it, I'm sure she will, for she cried when you was not to be found, here fourteen years ago, when she came to me; and I was obliged to swear before the Bailly that I didn't know where that ugly thing had taken you. To be sure she might well cry, for it was just after her son, the Prince of Lamare, died, and he led a sad rakish life; and they said it was all along of somebody I shan't mention, who married his sister, and then he thought to have all the money when the old ones died: but there's one of 'em not dead yet, and certain I am she will take care of her son's child.'

'How did you learn,' said Laure with impatience;—'are you sure I am the Prince of Lamare's daughter?'

'Ay, sure,' cried Madelon. 'Madame Brience told me so herself, to make me confess where you was hid. Bless her! she could not tell that I should have been as glad to have known as she, every bit.'

'And for what purpose,' asked Laure, 'did Mademoiselle Bridonette remove me from you—by whose direction?'

'Why she says the Comte D'Ogimond sent her by the Prince's order; but Lord! it was no such thing; for Monsieur Lamare thought when he died that you was at nurse with me, and so he told Madame Brience, his mother.'

'I wish I could have the honour of seeing Madame Brience!' said Laure thoughtfully.

'And so you shall,' cried Madelon.

Busied in conjecturing what would be her fate, Laure did not hear this affirmation; and the gouvernante was prevented from repeating it by the entrance of Monsieur L'Abbé, who was graciously pleased to direct her to accommodate properly the

*young person* who had thus unwillingly become his guest. He was rather advanced in years, and had never been a passionate admirer of beauty in any part of his life, so that the charms of Laure were not certainly the motive that induced him to take particular cognisance of her situation. He had been partly influenced to it to gratify Madelon, who was in his opinion an excellent cook and housewife; but principally to pique Madame de Germeil, who had, about ten years before, disoblged him very seriously, by rejecting, with contempt, his offered services as Lieutenant Pedagogue to the Comte's sons. An unlucky circumstance she certainly was not aware of, when she conceived the project of appealing to him, against the superfluous ceremony of being escorted the rest of her journey by forty or fifty horsemen.

When Madelon had dispatched the important business of preparing her master's supper, she instantly returned to Laure, who refused to partake of it, and took up the conversation with infinite dexterity and exactness, where she had broken off.

—‘And you shall see Madame Brience, my sweet child,’ cried she; ‘I’ll manage our Abbé, notwithstanding what he says of the Convention; for what has the Convention to do with you or your grand-mamma. I am sure there was no Convention when you was born, that I heard of. Lord! I used to put you on our jack-ass, and take you with me when I went to my old aunt's. I think I can see that pretty little face now, peeping out of one pannier, and the basket that carried our dinner in the other. I little thought then, you would be all at once such a beautiful young lady, and Madame Brience's grand-daughter.’

‘Do not give me that appellation yet, my good Madelon,’ said Laure, ‘for I shall never have the presumption to think it, until that Lady herself acknowledges me; but tell me Nurse, if you will permit me to call you so—’

‘That I will, my little heart!’ cried Madelon in raptures, ‘that I will!’

—‘Well my dear Nurse, did Bridonette say how I was disposed of, when I was taken from you?’

‘Why then you was sent to Languedoc, by the Comte D'Ogimond, to a sister of hers, for three years; and after that, this sister went to live at Chaillot, and there you staid until you was taken to the Chateau de Verni.’

‘And did she mention,’ asked Laure eagerly, ‘why the Comte acted thus?’

‘Why Monsieur L'Abbé asked her; but she said she did not know; and so then he made her write her name to all she had been owning: and truly Madame would not do it at first, but he soon made her.’

‘And would you, Nurse,’ said Laure, ‘if I write to Madame de Brience, would you contrive to send the letter for me?’

‘No, no,’ cried Madelon frowning, ‘no such thing: you must not do any thing without consulting Monsieur L’Abbé; and I warrant we’ll get him to write to her himself, instead of writing to the Convention. For you must know,’ continued Madelon, looking very significantly, ‘that he is easy enough dealt with when the guard folks are gone, and he has had his supper.’

This seasonable information a little calmed the terrors of Laure on her own account; but she yet feared Madame de Brience would not think the confession of Bridonette a sufficient authority for acknowledging her supposed grand-child.

When she retired to rest, having learnt from the Abbé of the imprisonment and disgrace of the Comte, she paid a tribute of tears to the misery of Adeline, and wept too that she could not shed them with her.

The next day verified the assertion of Madelon; for the Divine Magistrate, or rather the Magisterial Divine, actually sent a letter to Madame de Brience, which had been originally meant for the Convention, enclosing in it a copy of Mademoiselle Bridonette’s narrative.

Madelon exulted in the success of her persuasives, and becoming quite certain that every thing would move in concert with her wishes, almost lost her wits with joys; and put the natural sweetness of Laure’s temper to a most extravagant test, by introducing her to all her neighbours and companions, by no means a small number: of the inconveniencies she suffered in a situation so new and unpleasant, this was the most intolerable; yet it would certainly have been impolitic to have repelled the uncouth endearments of Madame la Gouvernante, and independent of this idea, Laure was incapable of slighting the honesty of affection, which though it ebullates whimsically, and is inconvenient in its effects, claims perhaps a superior share of gratitude, to the most courtly refinement of delicate attention. She endured it then as an unavoidable evil, with patience and even complacency.

When she was allowed time for reflection, she sometimes abandoned herself to the terror of being cast on the world, unprotected, desolate and forlorn; then admitted the soft hope of being cherished by a friend, attached to her by nature as well as affection; and again rejected the idea as too flattering an illusion, for with it she could not forbear connecting De Saint Ouïn and happiness. She hoped, from the hints the Abbé had thrown out in her presence, that the Comte’s arrest was not in consequence of the enmity, or accusations of the Marquis’s family; and pleased herself with thinking they had little, if any share in his disgrace.

Her imagination was bewildered in conjecturing the motive of the Comte for so cruelly withdrawing her from the knowledge of the Duchess de Brience; for she could not persuade herself, the portion that would have been allotted her as a natural child, could have had any weight or influence with a man of the Comte’s immense fortune.

## CHAP. XIX.

BURIED in reflection, Laure was revolving in her mind the occurrences of the last week, when a voice struck her ear, which effectually put an end to her reverie. It inquired of Madelon for her master, who happened to be from home; and at the instant Laure recollected the accents of Mr. Cosbyne, he was ushered into the room by the officious Madelon, with many assurances that Monsieur L'Abbé would not detain him long.

When he saw Laure he started, and seemed for a minute motionless with astonishment; but making an effort to recover himself, he advanced into the room, and in a faltering voice, uttered something she was too much confused either to hear or understand, and her salutation was equally unintelligible to him. At length he stammered out, 'The pleasure of seeing Mademoiselle D'Aubigny is so unexpected, that I am afraid—I believe—I—'

'Diantre,' cried Madelon; and so you know my beautiful Louise! Who would have thought it? Why I fancied you to have been some travelling gentleman she had never seen before, and so I thought while you was waiting a bit for Monsieur L'Abbé, you could be telling her some travelling story, or a crumb of news, or something or other—but where now can you two have met? for our Louise is just come from England, and you just want to be going there.'

At this interrogation Mr. Cosbyne looked very much embarrassed in spite of every effort to appear otherwise: while Madelon gazed at him with infinite hilarity, fully expecting a circumstantial answer. He turned however to Laure, and scarcely knowing what he said, inquired for Madame de Germeil and Mademoiselle D'Ogimond. She was unable to articulate a reply; but Madelon amply made up the deficiency by vociferating, 'Oh, Diantre! they are safe enough at Paris by this time; and I hope they will be kept there, and not be suffered to run all about into foreign countries, taking other people's children with them.'

Laure had perhaps as little pride or vanity in her composition as ever fell to the share of woman; but it was not in human nature to support her present situation unmoved. He appeared much concerned at her evident emotion, and in terms of the highest respect, entreated her to pardon the error he had committed in thus intruding upon her, he feared very unseasonably. 'I will call again,' continued he, 'for the passport I was directed to obtain here, and perhaps if you should then be disengaged, you will allow me to inquire if you have any commands to England.'

Mr. Cosbyne was retiring; but Laure making an effort to speak, he returned.

'I ought to beg your pardon,' she murmured in a low voice, 'for thus suffering my concern to overcome me; but the accident that separated me from Madame de Germeil—from Adeline—'



‘It is a very good accident,’ interrupted Madelon. ‘Jesus Mâtere! sure you are not sorry to find your grand-mamma, after you have been taken from her here a matter of fifteen years last St. John’s day; I think it a clever accident that brings you back again.’

Cosbyne had borne this interruption very impatiently, and looked at Laure as if he wished her to proceed; but the speech of Madelon had entirely chased the small degree of courage that had animated her to begin a kind of explanation; and it was with difficulty she restrained her tears. Observing the conflict, he respectfully withdrew; and in the afternoon Laure received from her maid the following note:

“I have heard, with infinite regret, the accident that has befallen Mademoiselle D’Aubigny’s friends; but I have the consolation of learning at the same time, that it is imagined the restraint they experience at this moment will not be of long duration. I intend remaining at this place some days, and if Mademoiselle D’Aubigny will do me the honor to recollect and communicate to me any occasion on which I can be of the smallest utility to her, she will confer a singular favour on her most devoted humble servant,

“H. COSBYNE.”

Laure thought his conduct so delicate and friendly, that while her answer declined his offered services, she yet expressed her sense of it in terms highly gratifying.

The next day Mr. Cosbyne waited until he found the Abbé had again gone out, and then called on his passport business. But Madelon, offended that he had not noticed her the day before, did not a second time introduce him to her Louise; and he was obliged to solicit very earnestly to-day for what had been so unexpectedly offered him yesterday.

The moment Laure saw him, she expressed her gratitude for the contents of his note; yet assured him that no exigency in her affairs obliged her at that time to call forth his polite attentions.

‘I am most happy to hear it,’ he returned; ‘but at any future moment, may I hope you will recollect how happy any commands from you would make me.’ Laure bowed; and after a pause, informed him she had had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Grenby very lately in perfect health; for that the last day but one she had passed in England, had been in her society.

‘She must have felt her good fortune very much embittered,’ returned he with a sigh, ‘by the idea of so speedy a separation!’

The return of the Abbé now interrupted the conference; and Laure withdrew, not at all displeased at being released from a conversation, which to support required more serenity than she was then mistress of. Mr. Cosbyne staid some time with Monsieur L’Abbé, who was so much pleased with him, that he consented to dine at his Hotel; where the hospitable Englishman lost no ground in his favour. In return, the Priest insisted that his entertainer should partake of his soup the next day. The invitation was

not forgotten, and had the Abbé possessed any observation, he would have then discovered the source of the wonderful respect he was so much delighted with. Laure was present, and Mr. Cosbyne nearly forgot more than once that any other person was in the room. But the Abbé had not the absurd objection some people entertain, of talking without being answered; on the contrary, he scarcely ever required such an effort from his auditors, and was satisfied with a few equivocal proofs of attention, which might very well be bestowed, without diverting the imagination from any subject that chanced to occupy it.

The day was spent by the Abbé very much to his satisfaction, in talking—by Cosbyne, in gazing—and by Laure, in counting the hours and minutes as they passed, and congratulating herself that her suspense was so much nearer to a conclusion.

At length the messenger returned with letters from the Duchess de Brience: Laure was told of it; but permitted to feel, at least half an hour, all the agitation and terror such a crisis must unavoidably occasion, before the Priest thought fit to inform her of the contents of the packet.

The phlegmatic animal then presented her a letter very gravely, without uttering a syllable. His manner led her to expect that she was rejected and disowned: her heart failed, and she became very faint; while the letter remained unopened in her trembling hand.

Madelon, who had been to market, returned at this moment; and seeing the messenger, flew hastily to hear the news he brought. She burst into the room, with her apron full of roots and herbs, and a string of onions in her right hand: immediately discerning the situation of Laure's mind, 'Jesus Mâtere!' cried she in a tone of vexation, 'what's the matter?'

Laure's emotions, which had been hardly supportable, were now relieved by tears; and Madelon conjecturing the cause, blubbered an accompaniment, with such a storm of concern, that the Abbé raised his voice several times in vain.

When the hurricane subsided, he desired to know if she was frantic; and turning to Laure, 'Why are you thus discomposed, child?' said he. 'When you read your letter, you will find a more ample subject for joy than grief, in the affection Madame Brience expresses for you, and in her inclination to acknowledge you as her relation. Indeed,' continued he, not observing the effect of his speech upon Laure, 'she could not act otherwise, after I had taken the trouble to explain what she ought to do.'

'Sainte Vierge!' exclaimed Madelon, 'why then it goes right after all! God bless you, Monsieur L'Abbé, for bringing it to pass.' And letting slip the lower part of her apron, which was gathered up in her hand, cabbages, carrots, sorrel, garlic, and sage, were scattered about the room in great profusion; while a large turnip, with ponderous gravity, fell on her master's jutting corn; but heedless of the confusion, Madelon threw her arms round his neck, in a most indecorous transport, and fixing the onions just under

his nose, he struggled hard to disengage himself; the effort occasioned a large pin in her sleeve to assault his shoulder with a violence that made him shriek with the smart, and tore his cassock, which was rather old and infirm, from top to bottom. Yet scarcely perceiving the effect of her unlimited ecstasy, she quitted the Abbé, with his torn cassock, and his eyes overflowing with water, and running to Laure, whose attention was engrossed by the letter she was reading, embraced her with a transport that had nearly suffocated her.

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## CHAP. XX.

MADAME DE BRIENCE had received intelligence from the Comte D'Ogimond of the existence of her son's daughter; which he had communicated in a paroxysm of rage against the amiable and unhappy Comtess, his wife. A formal separation had been procured by her friends previous to the death of her father, the Duke de Brience, whose large fortune devolved, at his decease, solely to her, without being subject to the controul of her unworthy husband.

This circumstance, followed by his confinement, had irritated him almost to frenzy; and hopeless himself of enjoying the estates of the Duke, he was outrageous to find that the woman he detested with equal vehemence and injustice should undisturbedly inherit them; and to raise her a rival in the affections of Madame de Brience, who had possessions exclusive of her jointure, he chose to forego a most favourite and long-concerted plan. He had intimated to the Duchess that the child of the Prince de Lamare was under his protection; and this confirmed so exactly the confession of Bridonette, and the affirmation of Madelon, that she was firmly persuaded Laure was indeed her lost grand-daughter.

Her letter breathed the kindest, and most maternal sentiments; and she intreated the Abbé to have the goodness to convey the young lady to her, with a proper escort, and sent a servant of her own to attend her; who presented to the Abbé and his gouvernante many valuable and unequivocal proofs of the old Duchess's gratitude for the part they had acted in the discovery. She requested too that Madelon might be permitted to accompany Laure into Normandy, where she had for the present retired, both because she wished to see her, and that she had been disappointed in her intention of sending her principal femme de chambre, who was ill. Her own age and infirmities rendering the journey to her very tedious and painful.

To the last petition the Abbé gave an immediate and positive denial; very much to the discomposure of Madelon's temper, who was obliged to remain with him, because she could not get away without a passport, which was in the power of the Abbé alone to grant. He affirmed too that any escort would be superfluous; and observed with much complacency, that a small bit of paper signed by him would be a more powerful guard than any other that could be assigned her.

Laure was too impatient to quit him, to dispute this point; and thought the attendance of her own maid, and Louis, the servant Madame de Brience had sent, *added* to the small bit of paper signed by the Abbé, would be a sufficient protection from insult.

It was settled that she should depart early the next morning; and Madelon was inconsolable that she could not accompany her. To soften her grief, notwithstanding the liberal bounty of the Duchess, Laure presented her all the money she possessed; and as the gift was not proportionate to her wishes, she added to it some valuable trinkets.

In the evening Mr. Cosbyne called on the Abbé, and listened to the history of the day with great composure; for he had heard it all before from his valet, who had derived it from the indefatigable tongue of Madelon. When he understood that Laure was to make the journey with so slender an equipage, he determined immediately to travel the same road, and keep her in sight until she arrived at the habitation of the Duchess. On revolving this scheme, he could not forbear secretly blessing the perverseness of the conceited Priest, which gave him so excellent a plea for following an impulse that would have incited him to it without any plea at all.

Not suspecting his design, Laure began her journey; after being delayed an hour and half in receiving the caresses, and listening to the murmurs of the *gouvernante*, who scolded, whimpered, exclaimed and entreated to very little purpose; the Abbé remained inexorable, and she was obliged to submit to his will, and fulfil her destiny.

Laure travelled three stages very quietly, anticipating the new and delightful pleasure of embracing an indulgent parent. As she travelled without an *Avant-Coureur*, Louis could not provide against the chance of not meeting with post-horses; and this was actually the case at the fourth stage. The post-master, with an aristocratical politeness, lamented the accident, and assured her he expected horses in every minute; yet she was obliged to wait two hours before they made their appearance, and then exert her patience some time longer, before they could be rendered in any degree capable of performing what was expected of them.

In the interval Mr. Cosbyne's chaise drove to the door, and Laure, who was at a window, instantly saw him; but had no other suspicion than that he was accidentally travelling the same road with her, and thought it strange he had not spoken of it the day before. Delighted to find she had conceived this idea, he very readily confirmed it; and learning from her where she intended to rest for the night, he put her into the carriage, with the pleasing hope of seeing her again in the evening, and perhaps prevailing with her to allow him to sup with her. He was however disappointed, without having ventured to make the request: Laure's judgment pointed out to her that it would not be proper, and might give their meeting the air of a pre-concerted scheme. Yet the sweetness of her disposition inclining her to avoid the appearance of rudeness or designed neglect, she determined not to sup at all, and pleading fatigue, went immediately to bed. Mr. Cosbyne was sensibly mortified at the defeat of his hopes; and not being in the convenient habit of discharging ill humour at random, on any one who happened to be within the circumference of his power, he chose to follow her example, giving orders to be called at day-break.

Laure breakfasted in her own chamber; and Mr. Cosbyne finding her thus reserved, sent, while her chaise was getting ready, to beg her company for five minutes. He then acknowledged that his anxiety for her safety had induced him to follow her; and representing the expectation Madame de Briece entertained, that she was much better accompanied, told her he meant to have the honour of attending her, at the distance he had hitherto done, if she insisted on it, until he saw her under the protection of the Duchess.

‘I am infinitely obliged to you Sir,’ said Laure, very much surprised at his declaration, ‘for the extraordinary trouble you have taken; and whatever Madame de Brience may have intended, I am certain she cannot wish me to tax your benevolence so heavily. Neither indeed will I consent to occupy so much of your time, or allow you to take this long and troublesome journey on my account.’

‘If not on your’s,’ replied he, ‘permit it on mine; since were I to leave you now, I should be haunted by the idea that you had suffered every accident you could possibly be liable to, with an hundred more that my imagination would lay in your way: setting aside then my protection, which I hope will not be required, you must in compassion suffer me to pursue my plan.’

After many arguments on either side, Laure finding she could not overcome the obstinacy of his perseverance, continued her journey; and Mr. Cosbyne, exulting in his victory, followed the same route. They met at the place where Laure stopt to eat her dinner, and she felt that she could not avoid asking him to partake of it. Cosbyne joyfully accepted the proposal; and his conversation, refined and cheerful, well repaid her condescension. He made no further effort to see her until the next day, though he rested at night at the same inn, and appeared satisfied with knowing she was safe; a delicacy of conduct with which Laure was so much pleased, that she readily granted him an interview of half an hour, which he interceded for through the medium of her woman, who knew him from having accompanied Laure in her visit to Mrs. Grenby. He had just taken her hand to lead her to the chaise, when the door burst open, and the Marquis De Saint Ouin rushed in, his countenance ghastly, his eye, which glanced alternately at Laure and Mr. Cosbyne, flashed rage and indignation, and his lips quivering with contempt, endeavoured in vain to articulate the resentment he laboured to express. Such an apparition struck Mr. Cosbyne with astonishment, and overwhelmed Laure with a sensation that annihilated all her faculties. The Marquis could not behold her agony unmoved, and was advancing to her with a very different expression of countenance, when Mr. Cosbyne’s voice inquiring with solicitude, how he could relieve her indisposition, again stopt him. ‘Oh Heaven!’ exclaimed she, ‘what can be the meaning of this—why do you look thus strangely at me?’

‘I have been to ——’ returned he, ‘and the woman—your nurse has told me ——’

‘And is it then,’ said Laure, mournfully, ‘the knowledge of my unexpected happiness that agitates De Saint Ouin with such angry passions?’

‘Your happiness!’ exclaimed he with fury: ‘and do you thus to my face persevere in your perfidy, and insultingly call it happiness?’

‘I do not comprehend you, Sir,’ replied Laure, gravely.

Cosbyne’s ear had caught the name of Saint Ouin, and instantly brought to his imagination the dialogue at Wincale, in which he had been mentioned by Laure; and

renewed in his memory the images he had then conceived from it, which he had been so industriously employed to expel since this last unexpected meeting with her, that he had very nearly succeeded. He easily guessed the suspicions of De Saint Ouïn, and knowing they must soon be removed, he could not bear to witness his happiness: collecting therefore all the fortitude he possessed, he assumed an air of tranquillity, and addressing Laure, ‘Perhaps,’ said he, ‘Monsieur de Saint Ouïn will have time to explain himself, while I inquire if your carriage is ready.’

‘What does he mean?’ cried the Marquis, astonished at his sudden retreat.

‘Tell me rather,’ asked Laure, ‘what I must imply from a violence and asperity I had little reason to expect from you.’

‘Did you not?’ returned he, too much irritated to answer her questions but by another, ‘did you not quit —— with that Englishman? Did he not almost live at the Abbé’s house while you were there? Ah, Laure! how was I repaid for the anxiety I suffered at hearing of your detention? When I flew to ——, the only consolation I received, was the knowledge of this Englishman’s attachment, and the complacency with which you listened to him. I was obliged to attend to a detail that almost tortured my soul, before I could learn whither you had gone; I then heard at the same time that your lover accompanied you; and I find the fears and doubts I have reproached myself for feeling, too fatally corroborated by a testimony you cannot invalidate.’

‘What testimony do you speak of?’ she asked with surprise.

‘The evidence of my senses,’ replied the Marquis: ‘acquainted with his passion, you yet encourage his attendance, and permit him to travel with you.’

‘If you are persuaded of what you say,’ cried Laure in anger, ‘I should certainly fail in endeavouring to convince you of your error; but I must observe in justice to Mr. Cosbyne, that I believe his motive for the trouble he has taken is solely in consideration of the friendship his sister did me the honour to express for me, when I was in England.’

‘And did his sister commission him,’ returned De Saint Ouïn reproachfully, ‘to meet you so opportunely at ——?’

Laure, offended at his suspicions, turned from him without speaking; at that instant the following note was brought to her from Mr. Cosbyne.

“Mademoiselle D’Aubigny will, I hope, do me the justice to believe that I am equally concerned for her safety now, as when I formed the project of following her to the Chateau de Brience; yet as Monsieur de Saint Ouïn must feel the same solicitude for her security, he will no doubt pursue the same method of ensuring it: and my attendance, now no longer necessary, I trust Mademoiselle D’Aubigny has not hitherto thought officious or impertinent.

“H. COSBYNE.”

Laure was surprised at the coldness and pique so apparent in this billet, and so utterly contradictory of his usual manner: but as she was far from wishing the continuance of his attentions, after what had fallen from the Marquis, she was not sorry that he had signified his intention of quitting her. Occupied with other ideas, she was not at leisure to reflect on the apparent inconsistency of his conduct; first attaching himself to her with such warmth of sentiment, and then coldly resigning her to the care of another, who had not manifested any anxiety to receive the trust.

De Saint Ouïñ having waited with much impatience until her attention was disengaged, moved towards her with a deportment rather more humble, and asked if she still thought him unworthy of an answer?

‘Not when your reason is unclouded with causeless rage and resentment,’ replied she mildly.

‘May I then take the liberty of inquiring,’ returned De Saint Ouïñ, ‘if that billet is not from —— the gentleman who just now quitted the room?’ She replied that it was. ‘It must be urgent business,’ observed the Marquis, ‘that obliges him to write five minutes only after he leaves you!’

Laure was prevented from shewing him the note, by that part of it which related to him. She thought it would appear to be an invitation to fulfil Mr. Cosbyne’s supposition; yet to be silent about it, she feared would justify the suspicions of De Saint Ouïñ, which though they excited her indignation, she would very gladly have removed.

Mean-while Louis finding his young lady did not appear, took the liberty of quitting his post at the chaise door, where he had been stationed for some time, to inform her it had been ready near an hour; and he was afraid, unless she set out immediately, she could not perform the stage, which was a very long one, before it would be dark. Much disconcerted at this remonstrance, Laure hastily curtsied to De Saint Ouïñ, and accompanied Louis down stairs: the Marquis expecting to find Cosbyne waiting for her, followed with very hostile intentions. He was however deceived: Mr. Cosbyne appeared only at the moment the carriage was driving off, to make his bow, and with much precipitation, in a tremulous voice, to wish her a pleasant journey.



## CHAP. XXI.

LAURE had scarcely travelled two leagues, when, at the entrance of a small town, she observed a number of people assembled, who appeared to be waiting her arrival. When the chaise approached them, they set up a great shout, and thronging round it, loaded her with the coarsest epithets of opprobrium. She was dreadfully terrified; yet endeavoured to learn from their reproaches, the cause of their animosity. Her maid fell into strong convulsions, which added to the horrible distress that assailed her: she wished to speak to Louis, but was afraid of putting her head out of the carriage to call to him, neither indeed could he have forced his way through the crowd to get near her.

The tumult now became more outrageous; the door was thrown open, and Laure was pulled out of the chaise with the rudest violence. She still preserved her senses, and instinctively called out in English, the language she had lately been accustomed to, 'What will become of me!' Her beauty and extreme youth moved a few who were near her, to something resembling compassion, or her death would have been instantaneous. They conducted her to a kind of square, and began by interrogation, which was meant to be a form of trial.

Laure had too often heard of the conclusion of this mode of process, to doubt her fate. And the recollection of having parted from De Saint Ouïn for the last time in anger, wrung her heart with such anguish, that the tears gushed from those eyes she raised to Heaven with an unconscious prayer that she might yet behold him once again. The accusations of her enraged judges, which she had at first been unable to comprehend, she now no longer heeded; and being called upon to confess her guilt, she stretched her clasped hands in silent and solemn adjuration to that Being, who knew her heart had never conceived an injurious purpose, or a criminal thought.

Some of the mob insisted on the instant execution of their vengeance; but those who immediately surrounded Laure, hesitated and still protracted the fatal sentence, which must however have been pronounced at last, had not De Saint Ouïn, assisted by Louis, penetrated through the crowd with incredible efforts. The Marquis called vehemently to the self-created tribunal to stop—'Citizens,' cried he, 'you are deceived: this is not the Duchess of ——, but an English woman.'

Her dress, her exclamation in a foreign language, and her succeeding silence, gave credit to the assertion. De Saint Ouïn was proceeding to harangue the ferocious assembly, when he discovered a man who had formerly been a serjeant in his regiment: he called to him by his name; and as the Marquis was always very much beloved by those under his command, the recognition was of service to his cause. The old serjeant assured his companions that citizen Saint Ouïn was a very honest man, and they might rely on his veracity. The air instantly resounded with "Vive les Anglois! Vive les Angloises!" To encourage the error, De Saint Ouïn desired Laure to address those good citizens in her own language, if she could not speak to them in French, and he would translate what she said. Laure, revived and supported by the presence of the Marquis, spoke a few words in

English, which he repeated to them as he thought proper; and she was re-conducted to her chaise, amidst the most vehement acclamations of unbounded applause. Her maid, scarcely recovered, and not yet sensible of her deliverance, was placed by her side, and they were suffered to proceed on their journey.

The whole transaction had been so rapid, so terrible, and so unexpected, that Laure could hardly forbear thinking it had been a dream. Her woman appeared stupified with the fright, and had neither answered her inquiries, nor moved from her position, when a voice called vehemently to the post-boy to stop. Laure expecting that De Saint Ouïn's misrepresentation had been discovered, shrunk into a corner, almost as much alarmed with the apprehension of danger, as she had been with the reality. Her fears however vanished on seeing the Marquis, who rode up at full speed: he assured her she had nothing more to apprehend. 'I have many things to say,' added he, 'but I must not detain you. Will it incommode you too much to admit me into the chaise for an hour?' Laure assented: he gave his horse to Louis, and placed himself by her side.

'Great God!' cried he, 'what a dreadful scene have I witnessed! Oh, Laure, I tremble, I shudder to think of it!'

'It would have been the last I should ever have witnessed,' returned she with a soft emotion of gratitude, 'had you not been present at it.'

'What victims,' exclaimed the Marquis in a transport, 'will not their fury require, if they could have immolated thee!'

'I hope,' said Laure, 'the unhappy Duchess of —— will escape; I shall rejoice if my danger has been her safety.'

'She was expected to pass through that cursed town,' said De Saint Ouïn, 'yesterday; but I suppose she has taken another route.'

'May I ask why you represented me to be an Englishwoman?'

'I knew,' returned he, 'that their rage must be quickly prevented, or it could not be prevented at all; and to enter into a detail, and have your passport examined, I was afraid would have required more time than the wretches would have allowed; and I equally dreaded, if they had discovered your name, lest they should have comprised you in the detestation the Comte D'Ogimond has so universally incurred. But, oh, my Laure! think what I must have suffered until you left the place. I was myself compelled to stay a short time, that I might not excite suspicion by appearing too much interested in your safety.'

De Saint Ouïn added, that if she could travel all night without fatiguing herself too sensibly, Louis had told him she could reach the Chateau de Brience early in the morning: for he felt such horror when he thought of the danger she had escaped, that he wished to place as many leagues as he could between her and the authors of it. Laure was

equally anxious to finish her journey, and Louis was made acquainted with her determination.

The Marquis was so pleased with his situation, that he forgot to resign it; neither did Laure recollect to require it of him. When he imagined the femme de chambre had composed herself to rest, he earnestly entreated her pardon for the suspicions he had given way to on Mr. Cosbyne's account, which he told her originated in the voluntary communication of Madame Madelon. Laure had imagined that he derived them from that never tarrying source of loquacity, and was therefore more willing to excuse them.

At nine in the morning they turned out of the high road, and Louis led the way, telling Laure they were only three miles from the Chateau de Brience. Her emotion increased in proportion as the distance lessened; and the Marquis was not quite composed on reflecting that the Duchess would now be the arbitress of his fate in that of Laure.

The house soon caught her eager eye, the carriage stopt, she was taken out and conducted to Madame de Brience's dressing-room. De Saint Ouin pressed her hand as she quitted him, and was too much agitated to utter a syllable.

Laure entered the room with a timid and faltering step, and the Duchess fixed her eyes upon her as she advanced, with the most earnest attention. At length stretching out her arms to her trembling grand-child, who flew to meet the maternal embrace, Madame de Brience fell senseless on her bosom. Laure was terrified, and called for assistance; but as no one answered, and she could not disengage herself to ring, she endeavoured by the tenderest caresses, to revive the Duchess, who soon recovered to the delight she experienced in contemplating the countenance of Laure, where she fondly traced a resemblance of her lost son, whose early death she had deplored with an energy of grief time had not yet been able to subdue.

'Did Madelon Duhamel accompany my child?' asked Madame de Brience. Laure related the objections of the Abbé to part with her, and the reluctance with which the gouvernante had submitted to remain with him. 'Whom then did he appoint to attend you?' — 'He thought,' returned she, 'that the servant you, Madam, had the goodness to send, and my maid—'

'Had you then no other protection?' said the Duchess with surprise. 'Good heavens! I would have sent every servant I have, rather than have exposed you to such perils as this calamitous moment teems with, had I not thought the magistrate would, at my request, have appointed you a more popular guard. What anxiety should I have suffered, had I known you were traversing this unhappy country without a probability of averting those evils you were so likely to encounter!'

Laure's face was overspread with a deep blush, while she related the accidental protection she had met with: the narrative exhibited an ingenuousness which, with the prelude emotion, excited a smiling attention in her auditors, until she recited the danger she had escaped by the assistance of the Marquis de Saint Ouin.

‘Where is the young man?’ cried Madame de Brience, ‘that I may thank him for preserving thee.’

On inquiring, Louis affirmed that he had left the house almost instantly, and departed in the chaise that had brought Mademoiselle. Laure felt excessively disconcerted at this intelligence, nor was the Duchess less disappointed. ‘Why does he avoid the gratitude to which he has so just a claim?’ said she. ‘Does he know how much I estimate the dear child he has rescued from destruction?’

Laure, charmed with a tenderness she had been so little accustomed to, fell at her feet, and looked up with so humble, so beautiful an acknowledgment, that the Duchess accompanied her caresses with tears.

The prepossession each had conceived for the other, hourly increased: Madame de Brience was delighted with the vivacity and sweetness of Laure’s temper, and surprised at the elevation of sentiment, and soundness of judgment that stole upon her observation, on a more intimate acquaintance; while Laure was equally captivated with the mild and engaging virtues of her maternal friend. The anxiety they mutually felt for Mademoiselle D’Ogimond was soon relieved, by learning that Madame Germeil had possessed address enough to obtain her own liberty and that of her pupil; and Madame de Brience was informed they had quitted the kingdom, but it was still uncertain where they had taken refuge. The Comte remained in confinement, nor was it supposed he would regain his freedom: the latter part of the intelligence was not very grievous to the feelings of a mother whose son he had been instrumental in destroying, and whose daughter had found her whole life embittered by his degenerate vices.

A letter was brought to Madame de Brience one morning, in the presence of Laure, from the Comtesse D’Ogimond. After reading it attentively, and with great emotion, ‘Laure,’ said the Duchess, ‘my daughter commissions me to assure you, that you will find in her an affectionate friend: she acknowledges you as her niece, and desires you will participate with her in the inheritance of her father.’

Laure’s cheeks were instantly suffused with blushes, and her eyes filled with tears; she had never before been so painfully affected; and feeling the generosity of the Comtesse with all its force, was penetrated with the keenest regret for having been induced to think unworthily of a woman who could act so nobly. Madame de Brience was surprised at her excessive emotion, and inquired the cause of it.

‘Oh, Madam,’ returned she, ‘Adeline will perhaps continue to be misled, as we have both been, and will not know the blessing she ought to possess in such a mother. I receive the offered friendship of the Comtesse as the highest honor, and am grateful that she will condescend to own me; but she must preserve her fortune for herself and for her children, who will one day, I trust, be better informed of her virtues than they are at present.’

‘My daughter possesses indeed the goodness you impute to her,’ said Madame de Brience, ‘yet in this affair she exercises only her integrity: she knows you have a claim to what she offers thus freely to your acceptance; and though you might find it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to elucidate that claim, yet as she is satisfied it exists, she thus uncompelled acknowledges the justice of it. I think I may venture to confide to that amiable and un-ambitious mind,’ continued she, ‘all the truth. You are, my sweet Laure, the legitimate child of my unhappy son: before I knew you, I was doubtful, if I had found you ignorant of this circumstance, whether I should act right in imparting it to you; for the Comtesse, you see, is willing to restore your inheritance; and as for titles and honors, they are now no more. What purpose then would be answered by plunging the family of the Prince’s supposed and acknowledged wife into the grief and indignation they must feel on learning a fact that stained the life of their innocent relation with unmerited obloquy, and brings to light a guilt, I, as a mother, would wish to have buried for ever.’

To a discovery so unexpected Laure listened in mute wonder; and the idea of her mother occupying her imagination, ‘Is she yet alive?’ said she eagerly. — ‘Who, my child?’ — ‘Is my mother alive?’ — ‘No,’ replied Madame de Brience, turning aside her face; ‘she retired from the world on that occasion which brought to light the perfidy of your father, and died shortly after. But spare me,’ continued the Duchess, ‘on this subject; it is too painful.’

Laure’s tears accompanied those of Madame de Brience, who in caressing the child of the injured and deserted mother, whose destiny she had often deplored, still in gazing at her as the living image of the father, satisfied the unextinguishable fondness of a parent, to a son whose death had cast a veil over his crimes.

## CHAP. XXII.

MADAME DE BRIENCE wrote to the old Marquis de Saint Ouïn, with whom she was slightly acquainted; and avowing the obligation his son had conferred upon her, with all the warmth of gratitude her increasing attachment to her grand-child inspired, lamented that he had withdrawn from her personal acknowledgment.

In ten days De Saint Ouïn himself brought the answer. Madame de Brience was alone when he was announced; she welcomed him with the utmost kindness, and smilingly reproached him for having so precipitately quitted her, without deigning to receive her thanks for the treasure he had brought her.

‘I feared, Madam,’ replied the Marquis rather embarrassed, ‘that at such a moment—and indeed I was entirely disqualified from having the honor of appearing before you, by travelling—without a servant.’

‘Well, well,’ interrupted the Duchess good humouredly, ‘we would have allowed you to make your toilet, while we wept over the happiness we owed to you. But why did you so long delay the pleasure your presence gives me?’

‘My father represented to me,’ replied the Marquis, ‘that by returning so precipitately—by returning immediately, I should raise a suspicion, if I happened to be observed, that might prove injurious to you in the present crisis of affairs. This motive alone could have had power to withhold me from sooner making an effort, which though I feel myself irresistibly impelled to, I tremble for its success.’

He then presented a letter from his father. The features of Madame de Brience, as she read, lost the smile which had adorned them, and she gravely considered the lines as they fell under her eye, longer than appeared necessary. The old Marquis had demanded of her, in form, the hand of Laure for his son; who traversing the apartment in a tumult of anxiety, observed the alteration of her countenance with yet increasing perturbation, which was wrought to its utmost height by the sudden entrance of Laure, who had been amusing herself in a small greenhouse contiguous to the Duchess’s dressing-room, and was ignorant of his arrival. She started, and Madame de Brience lifting up her eyes, beheld her in a confusion equally evident to others and painful to herself; while De Saint Ouïn, uncertain of his fate, addressed her with a solemnity that chilled her soul. After a silence of a few minutes, Madame de Brience recollecting herself, said to the Marquis, who felt every nerve vibrate to the sound, ‘Your father, M. De Saint Ouïn, tells me I cannot much longer continue in this country, and advises me to make every proper disposition for retreating to a happier one. He says you will have the goodness to inform me of the occurrences that render this step instantly necessary. I have already remitted large sums to England and Holland—but we will discuss this subject further after dinner; for the present let it rest.’

The intervening hours were passed by De Saint Ouïn in a state of restraint and suspense, so irksome, that his wishes secretly urged the approaching explanation, terrible as it appeared to him. While Laure, depressed by the thoughtful gravity of the Duchess, and the yet deeper gloom that overcast the features of the Marquis, felt her spirits sink beyond the possibility of concealment. In the evening Madame de Brience revived the subject of her intended emigration, and gaily asked Laure if she preferred assisting at the consultation, to amusing herself in any other manner?

‘No, Madam,’ she replied, ‘for I have not the vanity to imagine that I really can assist the consultation.’

‘Perhaps you might,’ said the Duchess smiling; ‘but I shall not insist on such a sacrifice of your time.’

Laure comprehended her meaning, and withdrew. She threw herself, when alone, on a sofa, and fell into a profound reverie: without being sensible of the time that had elapsed in meditation, she was roused by the appearance of De Saint Ouïn, who approached her with an air of satisfaction she could not but observe.

‘Is Madame de Brience alone?’ exclaimed she, rising hastily.

‘She is,’ returned he, ‘and kindly indicating to me where I might seek you, has permitted me to inform you of the result of our conference.’

‘And what then is decided?’ asked Laure, alluding to the projected flight.

‘That my fate depends solely upon you,’ replied he, throwing himself into an attitude of supplication. ‘Your kind, your worthy friend, has relieved the apprehension, that tormented me this morning, by acknowledging, that the only reluctance she feels, to promote my happiness, is the consequent loss to herself, of a blessing so lately found, and so highly prized.’

‘I must be dead to every sentiment of gratitude,’ said Laure, ‘if I did not declare, that it is to me a serious objection; and equally,’ she added with a deep blush, ‘that it is the only one I should entertain, if——’

‘How easily it is removed!’ cried the Marquis in a transport: ‘Why should I detach you from this dear and venerable friend, who is so sensible of your worth? No—take me to your society; and let my whole life be spent, in evincing my gratitude to you both.’

Laure highly approved the proposition; but then, recollecting that the Duchess might possibly expect her return to the drawing-room, she, with some difficulty, prevailed upon De Saint Ouïn to permit it. Madame de Brience, looking at her with complacency, as she entered, thought she had never before appeared so much to resemble her son. She was soon ascertained of Laure’s prepossession in favor of De Saint Ouïn; and confirmed the flattering hopes, she had already given him.

He remained two days at the Chateau de Brience; and then reluctantly left it, to inform the old Marquis of his happy success, and consult him on the best method, the Duchess could pursue, to avoid the ruin, that threatened every individual of the rank to which she appertained: for this was a subject, they did not dare to confide to any domestic, however faithful and attached.

Nine days elapsed, without hearing of him; and Madame de Brience could no longer sustain the drooping spirits of the anxious Laure.

They had just retired for the night, when they were alarmed by hearing that De Saint Ouïn was arrived, and earnestly desired to see them immediately. He was introduced to the apartment of the Duchess; whither Laure instantly flew. But what a shock did she receive on seeing him! He looked pale, fatigued, dispirited,—and was habited in a dress, at once coarse, dirty and mean; yet it could not effectually disguise a person, adorned with all the dignified grace of manly beauty. He had been obliged, he said, to travel twenty leagues south of Paris, instead of taking the route to Normandy, to elude suspicion; and change his dress, to avoid observation.

De Saint Ouïn then cautiously informed the Duchess, that it was known, by the confession of her agent, she had sent money out of the kingdom; which had created such a jealousy of her principles, and intentions, that he feared, it would be dangerous, to delay her departure, four and twenty hours. ‘I will go to the coast,’ added he, ‘immediately, and engage a vessel, if Valain has not already done it; which I have some reason to hope.’

Madame de Brience was confounded at this intelligence; and Laure was equally affected. De Saint Ouïn, tenderly pressing her hand, entreated her to be composed; while his own countenance exhibited a distress, he endeavoured in vain to conceal.

It was at length agreed, that they should be prepared to accompany Valain; who was to be sent, as early as possible, the next day, with a hired carriage, to conduct them to the place, from whence they were to embark for England;—that they should not have any other attendant, and be very plainly dressed. The Marquis was compelled to confide them thus to the care of Valain, and remain himself on the coast, both to preserve the vessel for their use, and because it would be highly imprudent, and dangerous, to be observed passing and repassing the same road often, in so short a time. The necessity of this circumstance gave him so much uneasiness, that he could scarcely persuade himself, they would not be prevented, by some inauspicious accident, from meeting as he proposed: and he quitted the Chateau, as he had entered it, in great despondency.

Madame de Brience recovering her composure, with a firmness of mind, that excited the emulative admiration of Laure, passed the remainder of the night, in settling what appeared to her the most urgent of her affairs. She had already retrenched much of her household, in conformity to the times; and entrusting to her steward the secret of her flight, she instructed him to give each individual of her family a gratuity, beyond their appointments; and to inform them, that, if they chose to follow her in her exile, they



should still be continued in their respective offices. She did not dare to write to her daughter, lest she should involve her in the suspicions, she had herself incurred; but sent by the steward, as the safer mode of communication, a verbal account of the necessity of the step she was taking.

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## CHAP. XXIII.

WHEN the Duchess had made every arrangement in her power, she awaited, with calm concern, the moment, that would tear her from the spot, which she venerated, as the former habitation of her husband's ancestors, and equally loved, as the place that had often witnessed the happiness of her youthful days.

Valain did not arrive till mid-day: he had been unable to procure any kind of carriage, but by going to a post-town, ten miles distant from the Chateau; and had been obliged to walk part of the way, because his horse had knocked up. He respectfully urged the ladies to an immediate departure; for he dreaded the effect of his master's anxious impatience, at this unexpected delay.

Madame de Brience rose, as he spoke, and walking to the window, with an air of dignity, looked steadily at the surrounding landscape, for a minute; and then, fixing her eyes, with equal solemnity, on the family pictures that hung round the room, she turned suddenly to Laure, and throwing, her arms round her; exclaimed, 'How could I support this, had I not such a consolation!'

Attended by the steward, (from whose melancholy countenance she turned with anguish) and supported by Laure, she passed hastily through the apartments, and walked to the place, where the carriage waited, unobserved by the domestics.

They travelled three hours, in a sad and apprehensive silence, interrupted only by Valain, who urged the driver, from time to time, to greater speed. When they arrived at the hut, by the sea-side, where De Saint Ouin had appointed to wait for them, Valain dismounted and entered it; but returning, with a look of dismay, declared the Marquis was not there.

Laure turned to Madame de Brience, with a look of anguish, and alarm, that wrung her heart. She consulted with Valain on what was to be done; who, after some consideration, told the ladies that a boat waited, at an appointed place, to conduct them to the vessel; which was at anchor at a small distance, that it might be the less observed from the shore; and he advised them to get on board immediately, and have every thing kept ready, to sail at a minute's notice, while he went to the adjacent villages to seek his master: and if he did not return by sun-set, they must then make for the English coast.

They waited an hour at the hut, in anxious expectation, before this plan was put into execution; and then, Saint Ouin not appearing, with sinking hearts, and exhausted spirits, they suffered Valain to conduct them to the boat. Just at the moment they caught a sight of it, it was putting out to sea. Valain advancing eagerly, shouted with all the vehemence, such a mortifying sight inspired; and the men, either hearing or seeing him, turned back. They said, they had been waiting there six hours, without any food; and their patience being quite exhausted, they were going on board, to procure something to eat.

Valain accompanied the ladies to the vessel; and, giving proper directions to the master, returned to the shore, to begin an expedition, he was himself hopeless of succeeding in. He was, however, mistaken: in the evening he brought intelligence, that the Marquis, while he was impatiently waiting, at a small distance from the hut, had been surprised by a large party, chiefly consisting of National Guards, who demanded of him, if he had seen a lady, (describing, as he thought, Madame de Brience) in any part of his route that day. Alarmed at the question, and desirous of removing them from a place, where he expected to see her arrive every minute, the Marquis mentioned a village, about five miles distant, where he said, he thought he had observed such a person.

The leaders of this tumultuous band, not in a situation to profit by verbal instruction, (being more than half intoxicated) insisted that De Saint Ouin should attend them, to the place he had indicated; and he was compelled to follow them.

He learnt by the way, that they had been on the road to the Chateau de Brience; but stopping within three miles of it, to refresh themselves at an Auberge, they were told, probably by some person who respected the Duchess, that she had quitted her house the day before. Without giving themselves the trouble of investigating the truth of this information, and very well satisfied with their situation, they continued drinking, until they became incapable of forming any plan of pursuit; but strolled about they knew not where: and nothing but a mischance, such as she had so narrowly escaped, could have put the Duchess in their power. De Saint Ouin accompanied them, in an agony of impatience and anxiety, human nature could hardly support.

As the progress of these sapient executors of justice was not the most quiet, or orderly, Valain heard of them at every cottage he passed; and, judging that they were very probably, by some means, concerned in his master's disappearance, he traced them to the village De Saint Ouin had led them to; and found his conjectures but too well certified.

He discovered the Marquis, with half repress rage, and despair, in his countenance, sitting in the midst of the disorderly band, whose spirits were not at all impaired, by the disappointment of their purpose.

De Saint Ouin cast his eyes on Valain, with a look of apprehension, the intelligent fellow endeavoured to dispel, by an air of cheerfulness and unconcern. He found means to converse with his master, for ten minutes; who, after listening to the account he gave of the Duchess and Laure, desired him to return, and entreat them to sail instantly; and he would contrive to follow them to England. He added, that the wretches already looked upon him with a jealous eye, and suspected the truth of the relation he had given of himself: and he did not dare attempt an escape, unless he were certain they were no longer on the French coast; that their pursuit of him, might not be the means of discovering them.

Valain was obliged to leave the Marquis, in this alarming situation; for he would not listen to any proposal, and persevered in declaring, he would not make any effort, to

recover his freedom, until he could reasonably imagine Madame de Brience and Laure were on the other side of the Channel: and, exhorting Valain to diminish, as much as possible, the inconveniencies of their voyage, by the most diligent attention, he dismissed him.

The anguish, inflicted by Valain's narrative, there was no time to express; for, by his previous direction, and the concurrence of the Duchess, they had stood out to sea. Madame de Brience suffered amazingly; and Laure, struggling at once against severe indisposition, and the most afflicting and dispiriting reflections, exerted herself incredibly to assist her.

The wind was fair; and at day-break they saw the land, they were making for. The morning was serene and pleasant; and between six and seven they reached the shore. The impatience of the Duchess to quit the vessel was so great, that she would not allow Valain to procure a carriage, before she disembarked. She sat upon the beach, incapable of moving; yet lifted up her eyes in thankfulness, that the severity of her sufferings were past.

While Valain hesitated, whether he should go instantly for assistance, to convey the ladies to an inn, or wait until the Duchess had a little recovered from her weakness,—a gentleman, who was walking on the beach, observing the appearance of distress they exhibited, came hastily up; and Laure, lifting her languid eyes on the joyful exclamation Valain uttered, recognized Mr. Fitzpier, with a degree of satisfaction, that made her spring forward to meet him.

The state in which he found the ladies, did not require any explanation: he had seen them land, and observed the men return immediately to their vessel, which was a large fishing smack; and concluded them to be, what they unhappily were,—French Exiles. He desired Valain to remain with the ladies; and, darting off like lightning, returned, in a quarter of an hour, with a carriage; into which he assisted Madame de Brience, and Laure;—and informing them, they were at a small watering place, on the Sussex coast, he accompanied them to a lodging-house, and gave them possession of a very neat apartment, he had occupied. His good-humoured exertions procured them every comfort the place afforded; and, while they took the repose they so much required, Fitzpier rode to the seat of a neighbouring gentleman, with whose family he was intimately acquainted; and representing the rank and merit of the strangers, and their situation, so unequal to it, Mrs. Dolby, the wife of his friend, returned with him, to offer her house, and every accommodation in her power, to their acceptance.

Madame de Brience expressed her gratitude, for an hospitality so liberal; but found herself so exhausted with fatigue, that she was quite unequal to the task of removing, though only a few miles.

Mrs. Dolby hearing she was without a female servant, sent one of her own to attend her, until another could be procured; and exerted herself, to alleviate the inconveniences they suffered, with the most assiduous benevolence.

## CHAP. XXIV.

THE next morning, before the Duchess arose, the anxious Laure, accompanied by Valain, indulged herself with walking on the beach; and casting many a look of solicitude, towards the coast she had quitted, returned sad and disappointed; endeavouring, however, to avert the alarms she felt, from the sympathizing bosom of her suffering friend.

Fitzpier, sending up his name in the evening, was admitted very readily; and received the acknowledgments of Madame de Brience, for the generous and uncommon attention, he had shewn to her and her grand-daughter. This appellation surprised him; but, without expressing it, he congratulated himself for having been induced, by the serenity of the morning, to be in the way of offering his assistance.

When he withdrew, the Duchess retired to rest: and Laure, then abandoning herself to extreme dejection, sat listening to the wind, which was loud and boisterous;—her imagination industriously representing to her De Saint Ouin, on his passage, encountering all the fury of the storm. These reflections occupied her all the night; and she started up at every sudden gust, to listen to the sound of imaginary distress, which incessantly filled her ears.

Early in the morning, she again returned to the beach; though she was often unable to advance a step, from the violence of the blast. The sea was tumultuously agitated; and Valain, on observing it, was far from being without anxiety.

While Laure was walking pensively, as near the sea as she could with prudence, Fitzpier came up to her.—‘I heard,’ cried he, ‘that you had walked this way, or, I must confess, I should not have guessed it; and I come to try if I can assist you, in your contest with the mighty North-East.’ He had hardly pronounced the words, when a furious whirlwind tore off his hat, and delivering it over to a wave, it was out of sight in a second. Fitzpier laughed at the accident, which had power only to discompose the outside of his head; and, as he still insisted on attending Laure, she was obliged, from humanity, to give up the satisfaction, she apparently felt, in being buffeted in so outrageous a manner; and proposed to bend her steps homeward. But, as she gave a parting glance at the contending waves, she thought she discovered a boat, just lifted for a moment into sight, and again disappearing. She turned hastily back; and, fixing her ardent eyes on the space, from which the object had vanished, remained immovable. Fitzpier asked, what had thus arrested her attention; but she heard him not: and the next minute bringing the boat again in view, he saw it; and, recollecting that the Marquis was expected, guessed at once, the reason of an earnestness so intense. The sea ran amazingly high; and he was doubtful, if the venturous mariners would ever reach the shore. The boat was sometimes lost, for five minutes; and then again appeared, on the summit of an enormous wave.

Laure gazed in breathless agitation; and Fitzpier, to divert her apprehensions, exclaimed, ‘How could those foolish fishermen put out, in such weather as this?’ He dispatched Valain to give notice of their situation, and try to obtain assistance for them;

and then endeavoured to prevail with Laure to return home, as the Duchess, he said, might be alarmed at the length of her absence. She was deaf to his representations; and heeded only the single object, on which her eyes, her soul was fixt.

The boat, which was an open one, was thrown a little nearer to the beach; which was soon crowded with those who came to look at the distress, and a few who came to relieve it. At length, one of the unhappy voyagers was washed overboard: Laure observing it, uttered a faint shriek, and sunk lifeless in the arms of Fitzpier. He conveyed her to the nearest house; and, desiring Valain to see her properly attended, returned to encourage the fishermen of the place, to save the boat's crew. They all declared, however, that it would be in vain to try; for they should only run the same hazard of perishing, without being of any service. The boat was declared to be a Frenchman; and, as it still made a little way, the people procured ropes to assist it, should they be so fortunate as to get within reach of them.

Fitzpier offered fifty guineas to any man, who would venture with him in a skiff, with ropes fastened to it, held by the people on shore, and carrying others, to throw to the distressed mariners. The bribe tempted a fellow, more daring than his companions; and they put off, amidst the encouraging shouts of the multitude; whose acclamations followed the generous humanity, they were unwilling to imitate.

The wind now abated a little; and, after numberless efforts, Fitzpier accomplished his benevolent purpose—and brought to land four men, (all who remained in the boat) nearly exhausted with opposing the fury of the storm. One of them eagerly asked, on what part of the English coast he then was. Fitzpier, struck by his voice, turned to him, with quickness, and discovered De Saint Ouïn, in the dress of a common sailor; his countenance disfigured by fatigue, and neglect. The recognition was mutual; and Fitzpier, directing his own servant, who was in the number of the spectators, to pay attention to the proper accommodation of the three Frenchmen, conducted the Marquis to his lodgings;—which were not, it is true, so convenient as those he had ceded to the Duchess de Brience, yet they were found very comfortable by De Saint Ouïn, who had not been in bed for a week. He wished, however, before he reposed, to ask some questions of Fitzpier; who would not, by any means, allow it;—and he quitted his guest just time enough, to prevent the appearance of Valain; who, having heard of his arrival, exhibited the most frantic joy, and earnestly desired to embrace his dear Marquis, after all the perils he had undergone.

Fitzpier did not chuse to comply with his wish; which, he imagined, had more affection than prudence in it: and deliberately locking the master in, and the man out, he marched to Madame de Brience, and Laure, to give the welcome information of De Saint Ouïn's safety.

They had already heard it; and learnt too, that it was imputed solely to the generous gallantry of Fitzpier. Laure met him at the door, and involuntarily embraced him, with an expression of countenance, “with which an angel may be supposed to look at his Creator.”

‘Where is he?’ cried the Duchess, eagerly.

Fitzpier told her, in what manner he had disposed of De Saint Ouïn; and added, that he did not yet know how near they were to him, as his entire ignorance of it was the only thing, that could have made him take the repose, he so much wanted. ‘And now,’ continued he, ‘I will return, and guard him from the intemperate zeal of poor Valain.’ His precaution was rather too late; for the Marquis had already heard his voice, which it was impossible to avoid, as Valain insisted on remaining at the chamber-door, execrating the officious interference of the Irishman.

De Saint Ouïn, concluding the ladies were not at a great distance, started up, and was surprised, and incensed, to find himself locked in. Fitzpier soon liberated him; and, perceiving that the circumstance of his vicinity to Laure could no longer be concealed, he was obliged to admit Valain, that he might officiate, in improving the appearance of his master; which was sufficient to alarm any one, less attached to him than Madame de Brience, and her lovely grand-daughter. This task hastily executed, he flew to them; and received a compensation for all he had suffered, and almost for what he had apprehended. The Duchess embraced him, with all the fondness of a tender mother; while Laure wept, and smiled, with a sweet combination of sensibility, and joy.

The worthy Fitzpier shared the felicity, he had been so instrumental in promoting: his own heart liberal, open, and sincere, very forcibly felt the attraction of these qualities in others; and when the ladies and De Saint Ouïn removed to London, he experienced so sensibly the loss of their society, that he soon followed them.

The promise made by the Duchess to her servants, by the intervention of her steward, to receive them again to her service, was claimed by most of them; and she was struck with the attachment, by which they were induced to prefer exile with her, to their native country, whither she could probably never return.

## CHAP. XXV.

DE SAINT OUIÏN had not been long in London, when he had the satisfaction of hearing from his father, that he was almost prepared to quit a scene of contention, and misery, that became every hour more insupportable: yet, as he should be obliged to pass into Switzerland, before he could join his son in England, he would entreat Madame de Brience not to delay the honour, she meant to confer upon his family, for the uncertain chance of his presence.

The Duchess received a letter to the same purpose; and determined, in consequence of it, to accelerate the union of De Saint Ouïin with Laure. The preparations for this event could not now be clogged, by the retarding ceremonies of high rank; and their fortunes, reduced from superfluity to a competency, though yet ample, did not require a length of time to settle.

In the attachment of the Marquis to his Laure, he had always been doubtful of success, and often hopeless: his felicity then in obtaining her, was proportionately increased by his former fears. Nor was hers less complete: to receive the sanction of a Parent, to a passion, she had so long, and so innocently cherished, was a perfection of happiness, to which her highest hopes had scarcely ever soared.

Madame de Brience had often been at a loss to divine, what could have induced the Comte D'Ogimond, to secrete Laure from her knowledge, and educate her, with the same care as his daughter, in the strictest principles of virtue. An accident unexpected, and unforeseen, illustrated his motive.—Madame de Brience was in a situation to relieve the pressing wants of her fellow-exiles; nor were they slow in demanding it, or the Duchess unwilling to succour those, who could procure a recommendation, from any known character. She could not even withhold her bounty from many, who had not the same advantage; and was often induced, by compassion, to alleviate the misery that casually met her eye, or struck her ear.

From the representation of one of her domestics, she was influenced to listen to the narrative of a man, who described himself to have lived in the first class of society, and to be now reduced to the most abject poverty. While he was yet telling his tale, Laure accidentally entered, and recognised, in the stranger, a man she had often observed, in long and deep conference with Madame de Germeil, and the Comte. She started; and his appearance exhibited such guilt, and confusion, that the Duchess could not forbear asking Laure, where she had before seen him.

He prevented her reply, by throwing himself at the feet of Madame de Brience, and acknowledging, that he had deceived her, in the account he had given of himself;—and that he had long been a miserable confidant, and agent of the crimes, of the Comte D'Ogimond; upon whose confinement, he had been compelled to quit France. He was ignorant, he said, that Mademoiselle Laure had discovered her affinity to the Duchess;



but he was heartily rejoiced, that she had escaped from the Comte, before his diabolical project had been effected. 'What project?' asked Madame de Brience hastily.

'It was on the declining health of the Prince de Lamare,' returned he, 'that he first concealed Mademoiselle Laure. He feared the discovery, Monsieur de Lamare might make, with regard to the child, would lessen the inheritance of Madame la Comtesse: but a few years after, the violent dislike he conceived for Madame D'Ogimond, and the increasing beauty of Mademoiselle, inspired him with the horrible design of obtaining a divorce, and, proving the legitimacy of Mademoiselle Laure, of securing the estates of the Duke de Brience, by marrying her, as the heiress of the Prince de Lamare.'

The Duchess shuddered at the recital; and the blood almost congealed in Laure's veins. She inquired if Madame de Germeil had concurred in this shocking plan.

The man replied, that the Comte had once mentioned it to her; but she thought the scheme so wild and dangerous, that she had persuaded him to give it up. When he found her so averse to it, he had spoken of it no more; but continued firm in his purpose, of putting it into execution, when he imagined he had influence enough to accomplish it.

Madame de Brience, unable to bear in her sight the avowed associate of so much villany, gave him a small sum, to relieve his immediate necessities, and dismissed him.

'Let me be thankful,' she exclaimed, when he had quitted the room, 'that one of my unfortunate offspring has escaped the infernal snares of this iniquitous monster! Oh! Lamare, would thou hadst lived, to see this lovely child of thine, whose goodness, and whose virtues diffuse comfort, and happiness, so liberally around her!'

De Saint Ouin endeavoured, by the most respectful and endearing attentions, to supply the place of the lost son, she could not even yet cease to deplore; and the anguish of bitter reflection was at length dispersed, in the contemplation of present happiness.

Madame de Brience learnt, that her daughter lived in peace, notwithstanding the storms that surrounded her; and that her virtues were respected, even in a country, where the existence of virtue was almost denied. Relying on circumstances, so unexpectedly favourable, the Duchess yet hoped, she might escape the general devastation; and turned her eyes, with satisfaction, on her little domestic circle.

Fitzpier was called from it, only to return with an amiable, and charming young woman, who had, on the removal of the only obstacle to their union, rewarded a long and sincere attachment. She was received with complacency, as the wife of Fitzpier; and soon cherished, with affection, for her own engaging qualities.

Madame de Brience, and her children, could no longer, it is true, live in the splendor, to which they had been accustomed; but nature had happily given them qualifications, to enjoy the most exalted felicity, in a state of comparative obscurity.

FINIS.

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